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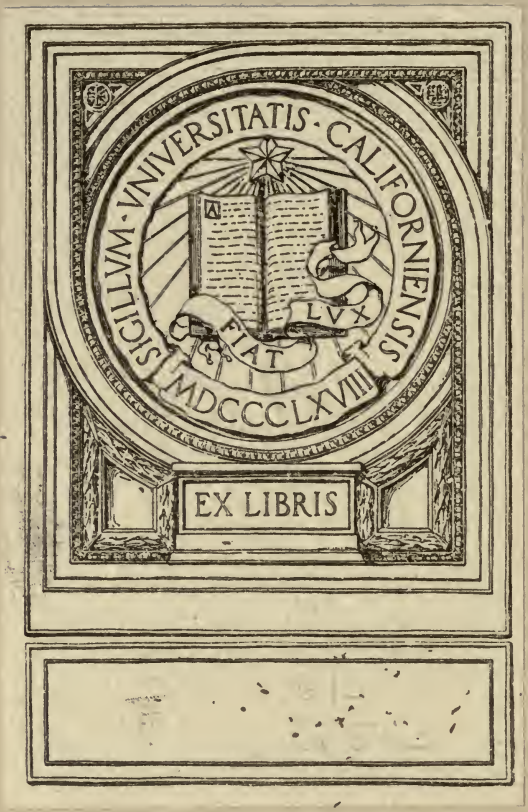
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SPORTING TRIPS OF A SUBALTERN

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ROAN ANTELOPE BULL.

[*Frontispiece.*

SPORTING TRIPS OF A SUBALTERN

BY

CAPTAIN B. R. M. GLOSSOP

LATE 5TH DRAGOON GUARDS

WITH PHOTOS TAKEN IN THE FIELD, AND FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION OF HEADS

LONDON AND NEW YORK

HARPER & BROTHERS

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UNIV. OF
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TO

MISS KEYSER

AND

MISS AGNES KEYSER

KINDEST OF FRIENDS

AND MOST CHARMING OF LADIES

I DEDICATE

THIS BOOK

263077

PREFACE

The following pages do not pretend to relate any very long or adventurous hunting trips; most of the sport described comes within reach of the great majority of subalterns. As, however, my career in that capacity gave me considerable opportunities of making the acquaintance of big game in several parts of the world—opportunities of which I availed myself to the best of my powers—I have thought it worth while to copy out my diaries that I always kept up on hunting trips, and commit them to print. My thanks are due to Major-General H. R. Abadie, C.B., for allowing me to use some photographs taken by his son, the late Captain G. H. F. Abadie, C.M.G., during our hunts together in Borgu. I am also indebted to the editor of the *Badminton Magazine* for leave to reproduce some articles that have already appeared in its pages.

I am not writing about soldiering, and for this reason it may appear to take rather a "back

seat." I can only say that had I allowed my sport to interfere with my duties, I should not have been granted the leave in which to indulge in it.

B. R. M. GLOSSOP.

February, 1906.

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SPORTING TRIPS OF A SUBALTERN

CHAPTER I

IN AN INDIAN JUNGLE

THROUGHOUT the greater part of India, a most wholesome public feeling with regard to the preservation of big game exists. This is far more efficacious than any number of game laws. No one, even should he be so young as to shoot an immature stag, or "brown" into a herd, need make the mistake twice; he will have had it pointed out to him, and he will wish sincerely he had never gone shooting at all, for the reputation of being a "butcher" is easily acquired in India, but not so easily lost. Long may it continue so, to the advantage of present and future sportsmen and the disadvantage of none; for who wants a row of undersized heads? Even sportsmanlike shooting, however, would take too heavy a toll if many indulged in it; luckily, the great majority are content with the polo, cricket, racing, hunting,

and small-game shooting that can be had in the vicinity of most stations, and do not bother about a sport that entails more time, perhaps more cash, and a comparatively solitary existence for a while.

I, for my part, never thought about it much during my first eighteen months in the East, and took my first leave in visiting Japan while the brother officer with whom I shared a bungalow went to Cashmir. I returned with some little curios, of which I felt ashamed when he produced some magnificent red and black bearskins.

In January, 1895, having safely steered through that formidable ordeal, the annual inspection by the Inspector-General of Cavalry, I got leave for a fortnight, and made what was practically my *début* at big-game shooting. I hadn't much idea whether I should be keen on it or not, but went mainly because I was invited by a cheery sportsman to join what I was sure would be a delightful Christmas party—it was a Christmas party, though postponed a month, as the jungle was late in "thinning" that year.

The locality was the Nepaul Terai, the great forest belt to the south of Nepaul, typical Indian jungle, which could only be properly negotiated on elephants.

A night journey from Meerut took me to Lucknow, whence, after a tedious wait, I got a

train at 5 p.m. which took me slowly, very slowly, away from civilization, and by the time it was dark we were travelling through the untrodden jungles, which cannot fail to arouse keenness in the most unsporting breast.

At midnight I, having made up my mind to keep awake in case of accidents, was sleeping soundly when my bearer came along to my carriage and announced, "Lukhimpur, sahib." This was the place where, according to instructions, I was to alight. I grabbed my rifles and jumped out, leaving all other minor impedimenta to my servant. The next thing, again according to instructions, was to look for a "doolie-dak." What that might be I had no notion, but found myself and my kit gathered up, so to speak, in the darkness and hurried outside the station by numerous attentive black men. Here lay the "doolie-dak," a sort of portable couch with curtains all round; so, leaving my body-servant and baggage to come on as best they could, I squeezed myself into it, taking one rifle to bed with me in case of any unusual occurrence. Eight coolies, working four at a time, then bore me off into the night at a jog-trot, humming a monotonous chant meanwhile. I had not the remotest idea where I was going, but thought—I don't know why—that I should reach my destination very soon. The wish, perhaps, was father to the thought, as I was

rather hungry by reason of having missed my dinner; as, however, I immediately went to sleep, that didn't trouble me much. My diary now reads as follows: "Woke, 8 a.m., to find myself deposited on a boat and a large river; supposed it was all right, so to sleep again. Woke 10.30 a.m., being carried once more. Struck by horrible thought; my host warned me to bring plenty of food for my journey, of course I forgot it till this moment. I might be carried like this for days, getting lighter and lighter! Stop my coolies and ask them, 'How far?' Not one understands a word. Shout it at them; no effect. We were now in thick jungle, high grass and stunted trees. Midday came and went, but at 12.30 we emerged into a clearing, and, joy of joys, a camp of clean, white tents."

Everything was now luxurious, a tent was ready for me—no subaltern's eighty pounder, but a regular marquee—and after a bath and a change, I eat a large lunch in the dining-tent, and am myself again.

I shall not describe the delightful shoot that followed, day by day as I have it recorded, but try to pick out the most interesting particulars of it.

Our first camp was situated about thirty miles from the borders of Nepaul, and occupied the site of a fort built by the Mohammedan invaders

of the country nearly a thousand years ago. In many respects it resembled the old British camps with which we are so familiar at home; but situated, as it was, in the very heart of the jungle, it had been better protected from the ravages of time and the foot of man. The mound and ditch of circumvallation were there, and also remains of the old walls and gateways—a powerful stronghold once, but now given over to the wild beasts of the forest. Truly a place to see the ghosts of the armed invaders and their victims when the moon shines through the great trees! On this occasion, though, we were much too cheery a party to think of that sort of thing. The "we" consisted of our host, his wife and daughters, who were as keen as any of us and marvellous at spotting game, though they did not use the rifle, and two more experienced sportsmen, I being the green hand of the party. We had nine elephants, four as a rule carried howdahs with a sportsman in each, the rest had "pads." Our host himself could rarely be induced to use a rifle, but confined himself to showing us sport. When he did perform himself, I have never seen a safer shot before or since.

Unfortunately, the Christmas rains had been late and prolonged—in fact, we had many wet days even then; the consequence was that the jungle was higher and denser than it should have been.

When moving in line it was frequently impossible to see the elephants to the right and left of one, even when standing in a howdah on an elephant, such a height was the grass. This made it very hard to see game, and all one's shots had to be taken quickly; add to this the fact that I was quite new to shooting from the top of an elephant, no easy matter, though I was provided with a perfectly trained beast that stood like a rock on a word from his "mahout," and it may be imagined that my contribution to the bag was not a large one.

A nilghai or blue bull was my first chance, and this was duly floored to my huge delight, though they are disappointing beasts, their horns being very small, considering their size. A day or two after, we were beating up a very heavy bit of jungle for tiger. Suddenly my elephant raised his trunk with a snort, and I saw the grass violently agitated in front of us and within a few yards, no animal visible. I had a shot on chance, judging the direction by the movement of the grass, and was answered by a loud "Wouf—wouf," alarming in its deepness and power; then followed more shots down the line and more deep responses. Nothing, however, was bagged, and it turned out afterwards—I thought they were tiger at the time—that we had disturbed at least three sloth bears; nobody actually saw one, and firing by the movement of the grass is very difficult—one is nearly

sure to go too high. These sloth bears are the terror of the jungle to natives, as they sleep so soundly that a man may almost tread on one, but being aroused they get up on their hind legs and, pawing the air, hurry past their unfortunate disturber; in passing they deal one fearful swinging blow, striking always about the height of a man's face, and ripping off flesh, features, eyes, and scalp, but leaving the victim with life, exactly as Kipling describes in his poem, "The Truce of the Bear," where "Matun, the old blind beggar, bandaged from brow to chin," relates his encounter with one. There are many such Matuns in India.

One day we came on a large, dark, brackish pool in the forest. While passing, my eye was caught by the light playing very vividly on a branch overhanging the water; looking more carefully, I saw an immense python was coiled around it, his head and a few feet of his length were hanging down. So absolutely still was he that, though he was quite close, we might easily have passed without noticing him. Here he might lie a day or more till some animal, coming to drink, would pass within reach; then, in a flash, a few more coils would be loosed, and down he would come, take a turn round his victim, and with the leverage of his tail still round the bough, swiftly but surely constrict till his prey became a pulp fit to be salivered over and swallowed whole.

Much though I should have liked to put a bullet in him, we were after nobler game, and I didn't like to disturb the jungle.

We had an exciting hunt after a leopard one day. He was spotted sneaking ahead of us, and marked down in a patch of long grass about ten acres or rather less in extent, with fairly open country all round. Two guns on elephants took their stand at two opposite corners, and the other two, of which I was one, with the rest of the elephants, proceeded to beat up and down in line. The brute refused to break cover, doubling back every time he got to the edge, and causing much trumpeting by coming right through the line. Once I saw him plainly right under the elephant next mine. I had my sights on him, but hesitated to press the trigger, as I believed the elephant had a leg directly behind him, and I thought I could get a clear shot in another moment. He was gone, however, as I looked, and though we chivied him till nearly dark, and time and again a trumpeting of elephants and shouting of mahouts proclaimed his presence, neither I nor any one else had another chance. On our way home we were skirting the forest when our host saw something standing under a tree. He called to me with his usual courtesy to take the shot. We were, however, about one hundred yards from the forest, which looked black in the dusk of evening, and I could

not be sure if I saw anything or not, so I shouted back to him to shoot. Crack went his rifle, and going up we found a large hyena stone dead with a bullet through his neck. That night we were serenaded by the mournful voice of a hyena, probably the mate of the one we had brought in.

The forest here was all divided into great "blocks" by broad rides, these "blocks" are periodically closed to even the few sportsmen who penetrate these regions, and are then termed "band jungle" (closed jungle), and become a sanctuary for game.

Our regular shooting seldom began before 10 or 11 o'clock—to give the elephants time to have a feed, a business not to be hurried through by the great beasts. One or two of us used to put in the early mornings by walks along these rides. As the sun rises, the stags return from the more open country, where they have spent the night, and seek the fastnesses of the forest. They may frequently be seen crossing the rides while so doing, and there is always the chance afterwards of seeing some of the great carnivora who dog their steps through life. Two of us one morning, stealing as noiselessly as possible along a ride, one on each side, hearing a heavy animal moving, lay down, when lo! out stepped a big Sambur stag and stood across the ride, listening, within forty yards of us! Alas! his horns looked too small, and glancing

across at my companion, he shook his head, and presently the stag walked slowly into the forest. We were just rising when, with a crash, another stag gave us a fleeting glimpse of a magnificent head as he bounded across the ride and disappeared in the jungle.

Camp was moved after a few days to a place which a man-eating tiger was said to frequent; perhaps a tiger that had killed men would better express him, as no tiger could be much of a man-eater in these unfrequented forests. There was a pool about two miles down a ride from camp, and report said that a huge tiger crossed the ride every evening to drink. I thought I would be very clever and steal a march on every one, so directly we arrived in camp, which was not till late, as we had shot all day, I slipped away and started alone down this ride. I went along for more than two miles without hearing or seeing a thing, and as it was rapidly getting dark, I thought I had better turn back; also, I must own the shadows of evening, the death-like stillness of the forest, and the feeling that though I could only see a yard or two on each side of the path, yet *something* might be watching me all the time, combined to make me feel a bit uncomfortable. No sooner had I turned than it suddenly seemed to get much darker, weird shadows fell across the ride, birds began to make most thoughtlessly sudden noises—in fact, I say

it with regret, I very much wished I was safe in the hospitable camp. I had got about half a mile back, and was wondering if one could hear a tiger stalking you from behind when "crash!" in a thicket close to the path directly in front. I pulled up dead. *This was just about two miles from camp*, the very place! I had timed myself coming out and noted the spot. It was getting darker every moment. There was clearly a heavy beast within a yard or two of the ride; it couldn't be a stag, or it must have heard me and gone away; it was absolutely invisible. A *détour* was impossible; even if I could force my way I could hardly have used my rifle; to pass was equally impossible. The beast was within springing distance of my path; every moment my chances seemed to diminish with the light. A cracking of bushes, nearer this time. I had no desire now to shoot a tiger, if only he'd go away. Happy thought, the human voice. I shout, "Get out, you —— brute!" Great commotion in the bush, but nothing goes away. Then, with my nerves wound up like a watch, I get reckless, and leaving the ride, with my rifle half up to my shoulder, I advanced straight at the noise I daren't pass. "Crash, wirrh!" and up flies a large peacock!

Feeling I had made rather an ass of myself, I kept quiet about my adventures on my return to

camp, and when asked where I'd been, said, "Oh, just out for a look round," whereupon I was warned of the dangers of going out alone at dusk. I fully realized them! A few nights after, the talk came round after dinner to the noise a large peacock makes in the jungle, particularly at roosting time, and an experienced sportsman tells a tale so similar to my adventure that I take heart and own up!

Our small game on this trip consisted mostly of pea-fowl, swamp partridge, hare, and an occasional florican.

My fortnight's leave was all too soon up; and one morning the line of elephants drew up at a little railway line that runs into the forest for carrying timber, and I and my belongings were deposited in a first-class carriage that my host, who seemed to work everything by magic, had conjured up. We were hooked on to a timber train and started for Bareilly.

The train crawled through the forest, and though I had till about 1 a.m. next morning in which to catch another at Bareilly, I sometimes doubted if it would be done. The guard, however, frequently came along the footboard to inquire the time of me, and then disappeared again in the direction of the engine, presumably to urge the driver to fresh efforts. I always put on half an hour or so for safety, and we did

it, leaving time for me to get a meal. The refreshment-room was crowded with a travelling theatrical company, of whom it is recorded in my diary that the ladies were supping on bottled beer and bloater paste!

CHAPTER II

SHOOTS ROUND A HILL STATION IN THE HIMALAYAS

Six months had elapsed since my Nepaul Terai shoot before I had a chance of "taking the field" again. Meanwhile I had been sent on duty to Mussoorie, our hill station and sanitorium. I had charge of the band, who usually summered in the hills, and some men of ours and the Fifth Lancers who were judged by the doctor to be in need of a change. My duties with the band consisted mainly in arranging their engagements and taking care they didn't blow themselves inside out, as they were much sought after up there. As for my other command, they were up there for good air and rest, being mostly convalescents, so parades were few and far between; while being smart, well-behaved fellows such as we generally had, they didn't require the presence of an officer much except on pay days! I thus had plenty of time to spare, and amused myself by running the "gymkhana," at which I was greatly assisted by the late Marajah of Patiala, who gave cups,

etc., and invariably competed for everything he could. We also got up soldiers' cricket elevens, and played great matches in places where a decent hit sent the ball right over the "khud" (precipice).

Shooting, however, I got none, and no one seemed to think there was any till the most fortunate arrival of one Captain Woodyatt, of the Gurkhas. He signalized his arrival by a most sporting event at a gymkhana, carrying a man over twelve stone—I'm not sure he wasn't thirteen—for fifty yards against a fleet-footed police-officer running a hundred. He was a most keen and experienced shikari, and kindly offered to pilot me out directly the rains were over.

One bright morning in July we started our tents and impedimenta off, and followed ourselves on ponies after lunch. Our way led along a very fair mountain-path that connects Tehri, the capital town of Gurwal, with Mussoorie. Here I must digress to say a word about Gurwal and its inhabitants. It lies on the borders of Nepaul, and, without going deep into its history, it was at one time practically overrun by its war-like neighbours, the Gurkhas. We, however, put things straight, and reinstated the present line of rajahs; they, in their turn, gave us some aid during the Indian Mutiny. It is now an independent state. There are Gurwali regiments in our

native army, and they, I believe, make fine soldiers, though I never had the fortune to meet them. The country consists of tier upon tier of vast mountains, culminating in the great snow-fields bordering Tibet, intersected by deep valleys fairly fertile at the bottom. These valleys, as I found to my cost later on, are very hot and stuffy during the summer months, and the rajah, and such of his subjects as get the chance, get higher into the hills at that time of year.

We rode some ten or twelve miles, the path keeping along the side of a spur, then left the syces (grooms) to take the ponies home, and walked another six miles; here we left the path and, after a scramble to the top of the spur, found our tents. We were now between 8000 and 9000 feet high, it was very cold, and a damp fog had rolled up, so nothing could be done that evening. The wild flowers were at their best now, just after the rains, and at this height the temperature was not unlike England, so the flowers were all familiar —dahlias particularly, of all colours, being in masses. We dined early, and before turning in discussed the morrow with our shikaris (hunters). Woodyatt supplied both of these, an intelligent looking Gurwali and a Gurkha.

Next morning we were up at 4.30, eating a hasty meal and watching one of the finest views in the world light up. To the north rose peak

after peak, range after range getting ever higher and higher till the long line of white snowfields and giant mountains framed the picture. In the other direction, lower pine-clad spurs ran down to the valley of the Dûn; beyond this again the, by comparison, lower siwalik hills, and beyond once more the flat, interminable plains just waking to a sweltering day.

Around us were short grass, flowers, and boulders of grey rock. Some few hundred feet lower, pine and deodar forests with thin jungle in places, growing thicker further down, but thickest of all in the deep, dark ravines. Far below were the little rushing streams, so far down that it was only with glasses one could make out the little strips of cultivation here and there along their banks.

Woodyatt took his Gurkha and I had the Gurwali, whose name was Hira something; I couldn't remember the rest, but "Hira" was familiar to me from Hira Singh, one of the Marajah of Patiala's famous polo team, and I suppose the finest native player in India at that date, so I gave the shikara to understand he must answer to "Hira Singh" till further orders.

We started in different directions over the steep, grassy slopes; the hillside was all in spurs, and up these in succession we crept carefully, and had a good look the other side before venturing on. As the sun got strong, some heavy white

clouds that had been below us, lying over the Dûn valley, came rolling up, and presently we were enveloped in them. A brisk breeze, however, kept them moving, so we had clear intervals. When everything was blotted out I sat down, and during one of these waits I heard a sharp "hiss" not far off. "Gûral, sahib," whispered Hira Singh; and I knew I was close to one of these Himalayan chamois. A break in the clouds, and there he was, within fifty yards, a shaggy, grey beast just the colour of the rock that half hid him. His fore-end was exposed; crack went my rifle, over he came, and at that instant down came the clouds again, so densely that for a minute or two we couldn't hit off where he had been, but came on him suddenly stone dead where he had fallen. On these expeditions I always took a "tiffin coolie," or lunch bearer, who followed at a respectful distance, and could be used also for carrying game back to camp. He took charge of the gûral, while Hira and I continued to the end of the spur, where I met Woodyatt, and we sat down to feed. The gûral was a nice-sized buck with a good head.

The weather had now changed for the worse, the clouds had settled down on us, and it was raining a steady drizzle. We decided, therefore, to leave the high ground, and climbed down about 1,000 feet to some heavy jungle; here, however,

we saw nothing better than "languor" monkeys, and eventually I had a terrible long pull back to camp, which was reached at 6.30 p.m.

The next day was still wet. I tried another direction, keeping just in the forest belt. In the morning I saw two little red spots below me, and getting within 200 yards and 50 feet above them, made them out to be karkur, the smallest of Himalayan deer, something corresponding to our roe. My first shot at the leader was a clean miss, but the second stood a moment, giving me another chance; and thinking I had gone high, a very common mistake firing down hill, I took in a little less fore-sight, and number two collapsed. It was a doe only, but not wasted, as they are very tender eating.

That afternoon we worked along the same spur, I above and Woodyatt a long way out of sight below. I saw a gûral over 300 yards away moving down a ravine, and had an unsportingly long shot, the excuse being that I wished to warn Woodyatt, and soon there was a rifle shot below, and he had done the needful. This was another doe; but shooting gûral and karkur, this is unavoidable, as the sexes are almost indistinguishable.

I talk about unsporting long shots, as they must always be so; one's object should be to get as near as possible to a beast, and then floor him "in one," thus avoiding "tinkering" him

and letting him get away, to perhaps die miserably. This, perhaps, does not apply so much in an open and rideable country, where a wounded beast can be soon ridden down and finished with rifle or spear.

This was the longest day we had; it was 8 o'clock when I got back to camp, having started before 6.

On the third day I climbed a great hill, said to be 10,000 feet, with a "dabei," or temple, on the top. This temple was supposed to give immunity from harm to all game on the hill below! Very absurd, of course, but I and every one with me always had most fearful bad luck on "dabei," so much so that though I have known game killed all round, I never knew the superstition disproved. My bad luck on it began that day. I was far down in thick jungle, following the tracks of a gerou, the big stag of these hills; Hira was about 200 feet below me, and the tiffin coolie the same above. Suddenly the latter began whistling frantically. I climbed up, and he pointed me out two animals some 300 yards off; I could only see bits of them now and then through the trees, but they looked rather like horned donkeys with bristling manes. I had to negotiate some very bad ground to get near them, but eventually got to about 150 yards, and sat down to get my breath before firing. They were, however, continually on the move in the

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SEROW.

[*To face p.* 20.

trees, and as I watched one disappeared altogether. I could only see a bit of the other, but in terror of losing him and without getting my wind properly, I took the shot and—that was the last I ever saw of them. Hira Singh now climbed up to me, and added to my mortification by much shaking of his head and muttering, "Serow, serow," and I knew then that I had had a chance at one of the most difficult animals to obtain that range the Himalayas. Though the serow does not live exclusively in the greatest altitudes, where alone some of the largest sheep and goats are to be found, yet he is very seldom met with. He lives in the thickest jungle of the deepest and darkest ravines, and is very shy. A link between the antelope and the goat, he resembles the former in the speed he gallops off downhill, and the latter in the short work he makes of the most precipitous places; thus, though fairly numerous in places, many a man has shot in the Himalayas for years and never even seen one.

On the return journey to camp, I was meditating on the wickedness of the world when Hira Singh, who had an impressive manner, took my arm and, pointing below, said, hurriedly and with the slight stammer he had, "Sus-surak, sahib, nichi." Down I lay, wild with excitement to retrieve my disaster, and, cocking my rifle, wriggled along to a rock, round which I cautiously

poked my head and looked everywhere—not a living thing to be seen. I looked back at Hira Singh, who had remained where I had left him, looking surprised. I beckoned to him to crawl up to me, which he did, but seemed unable to give me any further assistance, and as neither of us knew enough of the other's language to talk much, there the matter ended; and finding I was on a small path, more a game track than anything else, that led towards camp, we very presently returned. On telling Woodyatt of Hira's extraordinary behaviour in apparently spotting a beast and then not knowing in the least what had become of him, I found that my own proceedings must have impressed him at least equally. With my mind running on my lost beasts and my very imperfect knowledge of Hindustani, I had mistaken "surak" for "serow" (pronounced in these parts "surow"), and on his pointing out a track to me, I had wildly endeavoured to shoot it!

This was our last day, and next morning, forgetting misfortunes and remembering only successes, we walked merrily in over the hills to Mussoorie, doing eighteen miles in a trifle under five hours.

It was nearly a month, and we had got to the middle of August before another opportunity for "shikar" presented itself. Meanwhile my

thoughts ran on serow, an animal that a month before I had never heard of. This time I was accompanied by one L——, a young subaltern, whose only experience of "shikar" had been sitting up once for a tiger that never came. We got out some twenty miles and camped on the open, grassy slopes, with the forest below and the deep ravine where I had missed the serow within sight. Woodyatt had need of Hira Singh elsewhere, so I took another Gurwali, named Joarou, a very thin man, quiet as a cat as a rule, and able to go all day. He wore invariably a very ancient karkhi jacket, and his own legs unencumbered; but rather fancied his cap, which was round and made of velvet, worn *à la militaire*. In moments of intense excitement he would pull it off and stuff it into his mouth, to prevent himself shouting, I suppose.

Our first night was very cold and wet; however, we didn't mind such trifles, and after dinner drank success to our rifles in port wine, inadvertently finishing the supply that was meant for the trip.

Next morning we were up and away at 4.30 a.m., and after a little turn round the top to look for gûral, I dived down into the ravines after serow. I might have been hunting the snark himself for all I could see of them, and eventually striking fresh tracks of a bear, I followed them at best pace

right away to the very bottom of everything. I lost them in a watercourse, and it took me the rest of the day to climb up again; drenching rain added to my discomfiture. Four a.m. next morning saw me up and dressed ready for the light to start, when I went straight down to the ravines. Harder work I have never had. These ravines are full of bush as thick as an English coppice; this has, however, to be negotiated on ground only short of precipitous, and covered under foot with "ringal bamboo" stems, broken and laid flat downhill by the winter snows. These make it impossible to get a secure foothold, and going along the side of a hill, one is perpetually coming down "whack" on one's side, while going downhill one takes imperial falls that shake every bone in one's body. All this when there is need of absolute quiet if game is to be seen!

From 5 a.m. till 5 p.m. I tried ravine after ravine, and at last, after a specially rousing fall, I began to think I had had enough. For a minute or two I had been lying where I fell to get my wind, when "crack," a stick broke somewhere above me, and peering up under the bushes I saw two reddish-looking beasts, rather like pigs, sneaking about above. Serow! Chance No. 2 had arrived.

I must here explain that serow are red and white underneath, with black heads and necks,

and, being like nothing but themselves, always look like something different.

For the moment they were both too much hidden for me to get a clear shot, but they didn't seem alarmed, and being only some eighty yards off, I made sure of getting my chance. A slight noise to my left, and I glanced round to see Joarou wriggling along towards me, and, catching my eye, he pointed wildly uphill. He had just seen the serow, and thought I hadn't. Full of suppressed wrath, I shook my fist at him to keep him quiet. Alas! his movement or mine did the trick; a quick rush above, and my second chance was gone. What awful moments those are! Sadly I got up; sadly I imparted a few instructions to Joarou, which I am happy to think sank home, as he never did such a thing with me again. Then we returned to camp to find L—— as much upset as I was, and with almost as much cause. First of all, he had missed a fine gerou stag at rather over two hundred yards; then he had seen some karkur, but being unable to get a clear shot in the jungle, he climbed a tree, from which he looked down on them and noted a good head. He then very cautiously laid himself along the branch to get a steady shot; but alas! he was of somewhat weighty proportions, and at the critical moment the branch gave way, and with a terrific crash that cleared the hillside of game he fell

headlong. *À propos* of the gerou, I with the wisdom borne of the misfortunes of another, told him that he should never have tried so long a shot; the sequel to this bit of advice was rather amusing for me.

Only one more clear day's shooting now remained; our bag was nothing. On my previous expedition I had got a good gûral; but of the animals to be obtained in these regions I yet wanted gerou, karkur, and, most of all, serow. I was up accordingly at 4 a.m., and too impatient to wait for the light, we stumbled off in the dark. It had just got light enough for me to see my sights distinctly, and I had left the high ground when I spotted a little red ball about eighty yards above me; it was a karkur asleep. I was using a new purchase, a ·400 Express by Holland and Holland; a single-barrelled, hammerless ejector, and very handy. I put a bullet into the middle of the ball, and a grand little karkur buck, with good horns and tushes, rolled over and over, almost to my feet, stone dead. This bit of luck put fresh life into me, and I next climbed over a high spur, heading for some deodar forest that lay beyond. On the spur I saw gûral, which I let alone, and had a most glorious view of the snows; then down again among the trees and occasional patches of coppice. I crossed ridge after ridge, keeping at about the same level. Presently I noticed fairly

fresh tracks of a gerou stag, and white hairs on the trunks of trees where he had been rubbing himself; then over another ridge, and—I sat down quicker than ever before in my life! A huge stag, as big as a horse, and with immense spreading antlers, was right in front of me on the opposite spur. He was standing absolutely still, as if listening, and looking back over his shoulder; *but not my way*. A deep dip with a noisy current at the bottom separated us, which was probably the reason why he hadn't heard me. This was almost bare of cover, so it was impossible to get closer. He was, I judged, nearly two hundred and fifty yards away, and slightly below me. Raising the two-hundred-yards' sight, and taking in plenty of foresight, I aimed for his shoulder. That species of excitement that we used to call "buck fever" made me so unsteady, that I had to come down the first time, but realizing that at any moment my chance might be lost, I quickly calmed my nerves, and bringing my rifle to bear again, I pressed the trigger. The stag turned and, cantering easily uphill, entered some coppice before I could reload my single barrel, and was lost to sight. Only a big-game sportsman, or perhaps a fisherman who remembers the breaking away of a real good fish, can realize my feelings at that moment. The world seemed a hopeless blank; never again should I see such a stag, never

indeed deserve to see one. What was the good of toiling for days over the hills if I couldn't hold straight when my chance came? Hoping against hope that I might get another glimpse of him, and realizing that it would be an almost impossible shot if I did, I watched the bushes moving as he breasted the hill. But wait! The movement had ceased. Could he be hit after all? No, he showed no signs of it. Crash! By Jove! I believe he's down. Then crash! crash! crash! crash! rolling down the hill, over and over he comes, clear of the bushes now, and in full sight till he reaches the bottom, and lies, a glorious sight, damning the torrent below with his bulk. I honestly do not think that anything can raise one to such a pitch of elation as moments such as this. I know by the time I had reached him I had shouted myself absolutely hoarse. To my astonishment, when I had scrambled nearly down, L—— suddenly appeared. "Where the dickens have *you* dropped from?" I not unnaturally called out; and "*I* indeed," was the indignant answer. "Why, I have been stalking this stag for an hour, and had at last got within one hundred and fifty yards when you fired." So it was, and he had gradually followed the stag across my front, and it was for him the animal was looking when I first saw him, L——, mindful of his previous mishap and my advice,

GEROU STAG.

GÛRAL AND KARKUR.

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having been straining every nerve to get a close shot.

He was a huge beast and in capital condition; his horns were 38 inches long, with the ordinary brow and trez tines of the sambur, though the gerou frequently adds a bez; the beam was over 9 inches. I had hit him just right, and his journey up the hill must have been a dying effort. I hadn't an idea what we were going to do next. We were indeed within sight of our tents, but they were little white dots far away above us. The afternoon was well advanced, and it seemed to me that it would require more men than I had ever seen in these parts to move so heavy a beast. Joarou, however, proved equal to the occasion, and leaving me enjoying the first smoke I had allowed myself that day, and feeling at peace with the world, he started at a trot to collect men.

One rarely sees a sign of human beings in the vastness of these hills, nevertheless many little hamlets are tucked away in the lower valleys, and only about an hour had elapsed before Joarou was back with two or three wild-looking hillmen, and reported that express runners had been sent to two more villages about ten miles away, and that he would see the stag brought in as soon as possible. Leaving him, therefore, to enjoy a smoke in his turn, I climbed up to camp, and a very long and arduous pull I found it, though

burdened with only a light rifle, so much so that before I got in I began to be seriously uneasy as to my stag. Joarou, however, was as good as his word, and at 9.30 p.m., in the dark, a crowd of shouting Gurwalis turned up, some bearing torches, and the others carrying my beast *entire*, slung on stout saplings. The whole thing was a puzzle to me; where they had collected from, and how they had carried such a great weight up a mountain in the dark which had taxed my unencumbered energies in the day. I was about to reward them with money, but Joarou stopped me, saying they only wanted flesh. So the stag was promptly cut up; and a strange scene it was, the dead stag being dismembered, and the crowd of half-naked Gurwalis, the whole lit up by the glare of their pine torches. Each man got his share, and they all vanished into the night—appearing in the dark from their unseen habitations in the mighty hills, performing a gigantic task, and disappearing into the dark like spirits summoned by the wizard Joarou. We could see, though, where some of them had gone; for, an hour or two later, from our commanding spur, we could see little gleams of light shooting up far, far away, and Joarou said they were already cooking their meat.

Next day I was due back at Mussoorie, and after my success and exertions, also with a walk of some twenty to twenty-five miles home over

the hills before me, I determined to have a quiet morning and walk a little way round camp on top of the ridge to have a look for gûral. I started lazily enough, not being up till seven o'clock; but after breakfast it was such a lovely, bracing morning, that my resolutions went to the winds, and down I went to my old serow ravines. For two hours it was the same old game, shoving through, slipping, falling, trying to make no noise and making enough to waken the dead, and then —a wild, black head with a bristling mane on the long neck looking at me over the bushes some twenty-five yards off. Bang! Phut! The bullet told all right; my third chance at serow had not been wasted. Wild with excitement to see this curious beast at close quarters, I leant my rifle against a tree and swung myself by branches on to the ledge where I expected to find him lying. To my astonishment I came face to face with him pawing the ground, and looking like the "old gentleman" himself this time. As he saw me he backed quickly and lowered his head like a ram before a charge. Luckily I still had my hands on the boughs by which I had swung up, and promptly swung down again. Joarou had now come up and asked if I had hit. It may have been the sound of his voice, but there was the quick rush I was beginning to know, and the serow was far away down the hill. Very worried and puzzled, certain

too that my bullet had gone home, I swung up once more to the ledge, and there lay a serow stone dead. This was, of course, the one I had first seen, and being a fine buck, the other must have been a female, and I felt glad that she had escaped, though, as their horns are nearly identical and otherwise they closely resemble each other, I should have killed her unwittingly if I had had the chance, let alone the fact that I was for a moment in some danger of an ugly charge. It was a harmless lesson to me never to leave my rifle.

Once more the hillmen had to be summoned, but only a few this time, as though a serow is a weighty beast, he was nothing compared to my stag of the previous day. By midday he was in camp, and after attending to my heads and skins, I started at 2 o'clock to walk into Mussoorie; it took me till 9.30, going at a good steady "grind" all the way. I was not sorry, after my exertions of this and the previous day, to have a bit of dinner and turn in, feeling fatigued and exceedingly benevolent, as in this last day and a half I had completed my collection of the specialities of the locality.

Before going down again to the plains, I had one more shoot over my favourite ground. This time I was again accompanied by Captain Woodyatt and an officer of my own regiment, who I was

very anxious should see game, as on showing him my trophies he persisted in remarking that there must have been a sale of heads in Mussoorie! The second day out, while working a hillside in line, we had three bears dodging round us in some scrub, but couldn't get a shot; subsequently two of us joined, and sat down on a rock to wait for the third. We presently thought we spotted some gûral far away, but were not sure, so we got out our glasses, and while watching strolled a step or two forward. Suddenly a large, black bear stepped out of some bushes about 150 yards to our front. Seeing us, he set up a terrific grumbling, and walked quickly downhill in full view, an easy shot. By the time, though, that we had put down our glasses, run back and picked up our rifles, he was gone again.

The third day we shot round the mysterious "dabei" that I have mentioned before. As usual, this led to disaster; one of us missed a musk deer, another a munal pheasant, and the third, myself, saw some gerou hinds, which I stalked with great care and lay watching for some time. At last, convinced there was no stag, I stood up, and like a flash a stag that had been lying between me and the hinds was up and away.

The last night we camped further than I had ever been before, quite low down, only about 4000 feet. The chain of hills we had followed

from Mussoorie here sinks down to the largest of the torrents that go to form the Ganges, this particular one being called the Bairgrathi. Looking down stream we could just see Tehri, the rajah's capital, on its banks. Behind Tehri was another valley, narrow and precipitous, running into the hills; this was the line of the Billung, another large tributary. Across the valley the mountains rose again, higher and more sterile, with black-looking precipices; these completely hid the snows from our position. For some unaccountable reason, I was promptly seized with a desire to explore these inhospitable-looking solitudes on the first opportunity.

From here we returned to Mussoorie; we estimated the distance at nearly thirty miles, and we started with a climb of about 3000 feet. We had had ponies sent out to meet us on the path; I mention the distance, as we were much struck by the endurance of a Gurwali. We started late, about 11 o'clock, I think, and had a big load of pheasants—I forget how many, but three or four brace at least; these we wanted to get in in time to have some cooked for dinner. We gave them to the man, and told him to run to the first hamlet on the road, hand them to another man, who was to run on to the next, and so on, each man on the completion of his journey to wait on the path till we rode up and paid him. There were three

hamlets on our road close to the path. We rode in fairly fast, cantering much of the way, and fearing at every turn to see our birds resting. Not a sign of them was there, nor any exhausted Gurwali waiting to be paid; only when riding through Mussoorie at our journey's end did we overtake our *original* friend, jogging easily along with the basket on his head, and no intention of sharing his pay with any one.

CHAPTER III

A CHRISTMAS MEET IN THE KARDIR COUNTRY

My next form of shikar was the annual Christmas pig-sticking in the Ganges "kardir." This was very handy to Meerut, many of the best meets within thirty miles, so that with a properly laid "dâk" (relays of ponies), it was easy to ride out to the meets of the Tent Club in an afternoon.

Just a word as to that venerable institution, the Tent Club. It was founded on its present lines in the year 1866, and has continued ever since, its one object being the pursuit of "the unclean beast." Its records have been kept continuously since its formation, and the totals of boars killed each season vary from one in 1878–79, when the Afghan war drew off the sportsmen, to 110 in 1896–97, in which latter season we also speared 16 parah stags and a panther. Each decade shows an increasing number of boars accounted for, and this, notwitstanding the counter attractions, polo principally, that have arisen. The Kardir Cup, which is the great event of each season, is run

off in heats of three or four spears, the winner being he who can show blood on his spear-head first to the umpire.

Generations of sportsmen have come and gone in the kardir; one only has been a fixture. I refer to Luchman, the Tent Club's head "shikara;" he is mentioned familiarly in the records in 1874. For all I know, he is there now, standing on the back of his pad elephant, and using most fearful Hindustani oaths at the beaters, affecting themselves, their relations, and their pedigrees for many generations. Luchman has been "sacked" at intervals by keen presidents of the Tent Club for mistaking the ownership of whisky and such little peccadillos; but this has always been followed by such a falling-off of sport that he has been soon in his old place again, till such time as some one, who "knew not Joseph," repeated the unsuccessful experiment.

One day's pig-sticking is much like another; a short ride from the tents to the meet, and an extended line of coolies are seen squatting in the high, rank grass, and shivering in the cold morning air. This only refers to a cold-weather pig-stick, of course. There will probably be about one hundred beaters, a few elephants, and a camel or two. The spears having arranged themselves in heats of about four behind the line, a move forward is made, the coolies beating the grass with their

sticks, and shouting Ugh! Ugh! with more or less vigour, according to whether there happens to be a sahib in their vicinity or not. The second and third shikaras, Poran and Buggou, in my day, meanwhile dodge up and down the line, encouraging the beaters and, like Father O'Flyn, helping the lazy ones on with their sticks. A sudden clamour arises from one part of the line, and amid confused shouts, "Soor, soor" (pig, pig), "Burra dent wallal" (big tusker), and "Bhot burrah wallal" (very big one) are heard. Everything is hailed as a "Bhot burrah wallal" by the coolies; but the nearest heat soon gallop up and investigate, and perhaps are encouraged by Luchman's "Burrah soor, burrah soor, burrah soor" from his commanding position on the elephant. Then, if it's not your luck to belong to that heat, you see them probably spread out and circle around for a minute in front of the line till a shout proclaims some one is on to the boar, and they vanish, riding for all they know through the grass and reeds. Should the boar be roused close to you, you gallop up and perhaps get a glimpse of the great, grey back through the thick grass; then, being satisfied as to his sex, you set to work to get all you can out of your horse, keeping your eyes glued all the time on the boar; a moment's glance at the ground may, probably will, result in your losing sight of him for ever. At first it

takes you all your time to keep him in sight, then gradually you realize he is coming back to you; nearer and nearer you get, and now thinking you can use your spear, you are about to do so when—piggy has turned at right angles, and vanished in a specially big tuft of grass. How quick you turn on him depends largely on your mount. Many horses will follow pig by themselves almost, and turn nearly as sharp as they do. You dash into the grass, and there he is again going away beyond, but the "jink" has let in some one else, who is now riding him hotly, and you have in turn to ride on a flank, hoping that another jink will bring you in again. Eventually some one spears; the boar now discards flight and becomes a demon, charging every one in turn, and hurling his 200 or so pounds of bone and muscle at the horses. Never a sound comes from him but his angry Wouf! wouf! as he charges, till full of wounds and glory he suddenly sinks down and expires.

A parah stag gives a longer chase, so long that unless one is well mounted it is useless starting. Also, he has no fight in him, so that many are allowed to go if there are plenty of pig on foot. A good stag will stand some 11 hands high, and carries pretty little horns with brow and trez tines some 15, 16, or 17 inches in length.

But to return to this particular meet of Christmas, 1895. We were out for six days, keeping

Christmas royally by night and pursuing swine by day. I never knew good rideable boars so scarce; we killed five only, of which the tallest was 30 inches at the withers, and the heaviest 170 lbs. We had to put in a good deal of time with other game. I rode back one afternoon to the edge of the kardir, where I had seen a good herd of black buck on my way out, and was lucky enough to bag a nice buck. The total bag, besides the boar, being 1 parah (speared) and 1 goose, 221 duck, 92 snipe, 36 partridge, 6 hare, 6 quail, 2 pigeon, and my black buck. Considering the few boar killed, our casualty list was a heavy one, consisting of one horse killed by falling and breaking his neck, and four lamed more or less severely.

One incident I will mention before closing my account of this meet. I was riding behind the line with my syce (groom) following me; beside him was walking another syce with my second horse. A very diminutive boar broke back through the line, bowling over a coolie like a ninepin. Being unrideable, I, of course, let him alone; the ungrateful little beast, however, went straight for my two syces, and had them both on their backs sharp. He then stood for a moment under my led horse, ripping up at him like an old boar. Fortunately, having no tushes, he did no particular harm.

CHAPTER IV

SPORT IN THE PLAINS AND THE SIWALIK HILLS

Two days of 1896 had elapsed before I got any shikar. On the third, however, two of us went out ten miles from Meerut and bagged a good black buck.

Many people in India despise black-buck shooting, but it is really very good fun if not overdone, and there are many slower forms of entertainment than riding about the country with a rifle for buck, a gun for jheels (swamps) where duck or snipe may be seen, and a spear for anything rideable. The procedure, as a rule, is as follows:—Ponies are sent out overnight, and one drives out in the morning; then, having mounted, one rides off, attended by the syce and a shikara, and all keep a sharp look-out. A small reward to whoever first spots buck is a wonderful encouragement to eyesight. A herd having been sighted, all depends on the season of the year and the ground; should crops be standing, a stalk is a fairly easy matter, or often use may be made of a nullah or one of the

banked-up water distributaries for irrigation as a means of approach. Should the buck be in the open, it is a more difficult job. One way is to dismount and get your syce to lead your steed round the herd, you yourself keeping the horse between you and them. This must be originally done at such a distance that the buck are only curious, not alarmed; then, never allowing the syce to look towards the herd or to change his pace, the circle can gradually be narrowed. Should they show alarm, turn slightly outwards again till they have quieted. Eventually, when you are sure of your shot, or think a nearer approach would send them off altogether, sit down; the syce and horse preserve the even tenure of their way followed by the eyes of the herd, and you take your shot.

Another way is to have a cloth handy and putting it over your head to simulate the "Aryan brother" working in his fields. Buck are used to this familiar object, and will let it come within 150 yards. They are also used to seeing it continually stopping and bending down, so may stand when you sit down to shoot.

Talking of natives reminds me to say that care must be taken not to bag any while after buck in the crops; they have the most thoughtless way of bobbing up in line with or behind a buck. Also endeavour to ascertain what is beyond. I knew a

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CHEETAL STAG.

[*To face p.* 42.

sportsman who shot at a buck in some sugar-cane and was greeted with terrific yells. There was a village just behind, and, when he got round, the peaceful inhabitants, with outstretched arms, were fleeing for their lives. No one, of course, was touched, or I shouldn't repeat the story in jest. An *untrue* old Indian chestnut is the one of the cool sportsman who aimed at a buck, shot a nigger, and, looking round, saw his shikara was the only witness; so without more ado gave him his second barrel, and planted them both in a well.

Later on in the month, two of us went off for ten days to the Siwalik hills, which I have mentioned before as running parallel with the outer chain of the Himalayas, and separated therefrom by the valley of the Dûn. This was not a successful expedition; we "honked" (driving nullahs with coolies) all day, which I think was a mistake—the nullahs were too big for that sort of thing—and, bar a few cheetal, we saw hardly anything. The cheetal is otherwise called the "spotted deer," and is about the size of the fallow, with horns running to 38 inches in length. Keeping on the tops of the ridges, and using glasses on the hillsides would have been better fun, and would have probably shown us more game. We were led to the honking by a native shikara, who said the cover was too high for anything else, wherein I think he lied, and wished to get work and pay for his

numerous pals. Doubtless some of the pay found its way to his own pockets.

Tiger and leopard were plentiful, and we were within an ace of bagging one of the former. A cow was killed one night, and we sent out coolies to build "machans" (platforms) in the trees over the carcass; we went there about 4 p.m. My machan was so rickety and uncomfortable that I lay along a bough instead; I had a good view of the late cow, about twenty yards in front. I was never very partial to this form of amusement: you lie there with cramp in all your limbs, bitten by mosquitoes, not daring to more, not even able to smoke for fear of offending Mr. Stripes' delicate nostrils. For some time the silence of the forest was unbroken save by occasional violent flapping in the trees caused by the vultures, who were assembled in dozens, but who, either disturbed by us, or fearing the return of the tiger, didn't venture to the kill. Slowly the shadows lengthened, the last ray of the setting sun disappeared, and a cold breeze made a rustling in the trees; then darkness blotted out everything, but not for long, as it was an early moon and the forest was again visible in patches, a steady light falling on the carcass and its immediate surroundings. The tens of mosquitoes now changed to myriads, a perpetual buzz all round, hands, wrists, neck and face were soon tingling with their stings;

this would have been unbearable but for the interest now aroused by the sounds of the everlasting nightly hunt of the carnivora after the more harmless denizens of the jungle—a hunt that taxes all the resources and endurance of the latter from the time they are first able to relieve their mothers of the responsibility of their existence till the inevitable moment when old age, disablement or over-confidence betrays them to their relentless foes. This night some chattering monkeys first broke the stillness in the distance, and presently the cause of their anxiety was heard, a deep note not altogether unlike the lowing of an ox—a leopard was hunting. I have heard lions and leopards give tongue at night, but the tiger, I believe, always hunts in silence. I have never seen any explanation of this, but suppose each adopts the method that generations of experience have taught them, and that while the tiger trusts entirely to his wonderful stealth, craft, and to his lightning-like final rush, the others must petrify their quarry by their awful voices, much as a rabbit seems unable to move his limbs when in danger from a stoat. Presently sounds were heard again in another direction: the startled voice of a cheetal, then nearer the bark of a karkur deer, and then I can just hear a sound like a very heavy man advancing with a long pause after each step over the dead

leaves—a light foot coming down, barely audibly, a pause, then the gradual scrunch of a great weight placed on it; a pause again, then the same repeated. My shikara, behind me in the tree, whispers "Bagh" (tiger). Steadily on and on it comes, straight towards us from behind, till it pauses directly under my branch. The moon light is full on the kill, my rifle at my shoulder, and I hardly dare breath, expecting momentarily to see the beast step out. For over an hour I wait like this, but nothing comes; at last, desperate with mosquito bites and stiffness, I shift a bit and try to look under me; all is black there, and though I have made a slight noise in moving, not a sound comes from below. Silently as he came, something had roused the tiger's suspicions and far more silently has he gone. Another hour I waited, making five hours and a half since I began my watch; then, sore, stiff, and covered with mosquito bites, I could stand it no more, and gave two whistles, the signal agreed on for "Let's go home to bed." Back came the same signal from the other machan, and, with a sigh of relief, I dropped down from my bough, hoping as I did so that "stripes" really *had* gone.

This was a very uninteresting ending. Far more exciting was the experience of a brother officer of mine in the same Siwaliks not long after. *His* tiger arrived all right, but simultaneously with a rogue

elephant, which latter promptly set to work to try and pull the sportsman out of his machan. Now, there are severe penalties for shooting elephants in the Siwaliks, besides which his rifle was not heavy enough for such game, so not wanting to further enrage the beast in any way, he was busy getting higher up the tree while the tiger was dragging off the kill.

We discovered next day that our tiger had returned later and made his meal. A further discovery was that the original kill had taken place some way away from the trees, and that the coolies had dragged the carcass some twenty or thirty yards. This, of course, explained the tiger's extreme caution.

During February an amusing incident at a pig-stick occurred. We were out for the day only, not far from Meerut in a civilized district. A sportsman declared he spotted a pig enter a distant bush, and some of us galloped off and through the bush, when out walked a very indignant-looking old goat!

CHAPTER V

IN GURWAL

In March I had to go to a hill station, Chakrata, within a day's ride of Mussoorie, to study for my promotion examination. It was glorious weather, and from our windows we looked across the hills to the countless snow-peaks dazzling white against the blue sky. Even my studies, I fear, could hardly chain my thoughts from this glorious shikar ground. Day by day we had to study the weighty pages of the "Manual of Military Law," till at last we knew to a penny how much the dissolute soldier who has got drunk three times in a month should be fined. We knew exactly how to treat the offender whose demeanour caused all beholders to become alarmed and even despondent. We sketched the country for miles around, discovering "contours" in places where their existence had never previously been even suspected. One, I remember, to the consternation of the owner, was found under a fat bunnia's shop. We, in imagination, put the church in

states of defence against (*a*) European troops with guns, and (*b*) savages without, knowing full well meanwhile the number of picks and shovels requisite for such defences; and finally, having with an imaginary but red force utterly routed a rabble of blueish hue, and reduced Chakrata to imaginary ashes, we were able to seek for peace in the hills.

I had as a companion this time, Lieut.—now Major—Winwood, D.S.O., Fifth Dragoon Guards. We started by crossing the hills to Mussoorie, where we collected twenty-eight coolies, who with my old skikaras, Hira Singh and Joarou, and three personal attendants, completed the outfit. No sooner had we started than the weather broke and it rained on and off, mostly on, for the whole trip. This practically ruined the whole shoot, as day after day we were in the clouds, and could see nothing. We marched without much delay to Tehri, only stopping by my old serow nullah. Here Winwood promptly bagged a fine buck serow to the delight of both of us, and not least of our carriers. Tehri is very low, about 1000 feet, and entirely shut in, so it was most uncomfortably hot and stuffy at this time of year. We camped on the banks of the Bairgrathi river opposite the town. The river is crossed here by a somewhat rude suspension bridge. The town is small but pretty; the

rajah's winter residence and a large temple are most noticeable. The rajah himself was away up the hills, but kindly sent us a "chuprassi" (messenger) to help with supplies, etc. Going through the town next day we saw the schools, a jail, the rajah's elephants for shooting in the Dûn below, and a very uneven-looking polo-ground.

Our route now was up the valley of the Billung river, which here joins the Bairgrathi. It was very hot; there was no view but the wild and rocky sides of the valley, and there was no shikar. The only consolation was that every night we camped higher and the air got cooler.

On the outer fringe of this part of the Himalayas the tracks run along high up on the spurs, and almost everywhere afford grand views right across to the snows. In places you can see a hundred miles of snowy peaks; as, however, you get further into the mountains, they become higher and more broken and precipitous, so that the only practicable routes lie up the bottoms of the narrow valleys, and unless you leave your line of march to do a tremendous climb up places where no loaded carrier can follow you, it is a case of good-bye to your views till you emerge, days after, right among the peaks themselves. Even then there is a disappointment; your range of view from propinquity has become very limited,

bare, stony ravines and black precipices frown on you from every side. It is far beyond my pen to describe the desolate grandeur of it all; but the view eighty miles back is the finest after all. Even that snow-field that was one of those you saw glistening so brightly from afar looks dirty and uninviting now. These, however, were the "Thar juggas" (Places of the Thar), the beast we had come so far principally to seek. The thar are well represented at present at the Zoo; the small herd there including a remarkably fine "jula" (old ram), so any one who wishes to study him can do it without unnecessarily fatiguing themselves by following the Billung river to its source on the borders of Tibet. They have the reputation, which I am prepared to uphold as far as my limited knowledge goes, of living in more inaccessible places than any other game on earth. Certainly my first view of a "thar jugga" appalled me. A terrific precipice with narrow and very sloping ledges running across its face, ledges where it looked impossible for any living thing to pass, and—"Thar jugga," remarked Hira Singh.

Without going at length into our hunting of the thar, I will now pick out one of my most eventful days. Camp is pitched in a bare stony ravine, snow edges the summits on both sides and lies in patches down the watercourses. The

scene is lifeless, and it is hard to imagine that any beast can make its home here. At the head of the ravine a torrent dashes out under a snow-bridge from the base of a mass of ice and snow. I am roused from under my blankets by "Sahib, sahib, suri char budgi (half-past four); time get up, sahib." Bother the man; beastly cold; shan't move. "Master say I no let him go isleep again." So I had, but can't he see I've changed my mind? Gentle shaking of the shoulder; more "Sahib, sahib." Why can't he go away? Nothing will induce me to get up. Wait, though. Oh, by Jove! there's that flock of thar I saw yesterday and want to get at by daybreak, and through the open flap of the tent, letting in streams of icy air, I see the first grey signs of another day coming into the sky. I suddenly become wide awake as I realize that I am losing precious moments, and in a moment am up and getting on my clothes, while I upbraid my servant for calling me a bit late, which he takes as philosophically as he did my remonstrances concerning his early rising of a moment before. Outside the tent is my little folding-table, and a minute or two later I am breakfasting on a fid of "bouilli" beef and a cup of hot tea, anxiously watching the light which, during the short time since I woke, has changed the opposite hillside from an indistinct blur till I can make out first the little torrents, and then

the outline of the large boulders, while the snow-peak above the head of the ravine is already showing signs of pink, and the dark blue background is getting lighter. Below me is a billowy mass of white fog which I know, from sad experience, may be expected as soon as the sun gets a little power to rise and envelop us, blotting out everything. The singing of many waters is in my ears, as every gulley holds a tempestuous little series of waterfalls, and the roar of the snow-fed torrent comes up through the mist below.

My shikara is squatting on his "hunkas" by—almost on—the wood fire that produced my tea, opposite him the "personal attendant," both wrapped head and all in blankets, with only their faces peeping out, busy stirring weird concoctions in a pot. Two privileged coolies complete the party, wound about in horrible garments of great antiquity. One of them is smoking, holding a thar's horn between his hands, and pulling industriously at a hole bored at the point thereof. The personal attendant coughs ostentatiously from time to time as a protest against being brought up here away from his warm plains, his bazaar, and his family; and I can't help feeling a touch of compunction, though he volunteered for it, being led thereto by the offer of an increase of pay, which places him, temporarily, on a level with his "boss"—my fat old bearer in the plains

below. Also, I have brought a light tent for him, and he can sit by the fire all day, and needn't trudge over the hills except by short stages when camp is moved.

But now my breakfast is done. Think of eating half a tin of "bouilli" before 5 a.m. in London! Cramming some cartridges into my pockets, I take my rifle, hand my hybrid euoplia * to my shikara, and we are off, followed by a coolie with some more "bouilli" and my water-bottle. We strike off up a watercourse which necessitates climbing rather than walking; shale, sharp rocks and a small torrent are its component parts, the latter useful as a means of deadening our noise. Just ahead of us is the top, it *always* is in the Himalayas, but no one ever really gets there. However, after a stiff pull, we arrived at a few yards of more gentle gradient before the steep ascent recommences; this continues right and left, and is worn in the centre into a regular path, not made by man but by the feet of thar, who have probably used it for untold centuries. This track continues to the left, round a spur, and cautiously we follow it, and peep round; we see no thar at present, but a great gorge running into *cul de sac* in the hills. The whole of this gorge is under our observation, as also the valley behind us; we therefore decide it is a good spot to sit down,

* A weapon for shot or ball.

get our breath, and use glasses. The sun is now up, and though the peaks hide him, he is touching up the upper parts of the ridge, right round the *cul de sac*, and gradually stealing down towards us. The climb has warmed me up, and at moments such as these one realizes, or ought to realize, one's fortune—sound in wind and limb, amid scenery which for grandeur is unsurpassed if not unequalled in the world; game, if not in profusion, at least in every direction, and shooting rights unlimited over a thousand hills; and meanwhile millions of unhappy mortals are still in bed, with no very exciting prospect before them when they *do* wake.

So far, so good. But the other side of the picture was to present itself before that day was up, and perhaps few would have cared to change lots then.

Presently my shikara, Hira Singh, spots thar, and with my glasses I can make out a herd about half a mile away, towards the head of the *cul de sac*, apparently leaping in single file up a precipice. There is no cover but big boulders, and these cannot often be utilized, as the game tracks are almost the only negotiable bits of ground. With great care and much stooping and lying down, I get within about three hundred yards of some; but most of them have now moved further up, and I realize that they are getting over the

ground faster than I can without exposing myself, also the clouds are now rising from below, so that a further stalk will be impossible. Now or never, and I sit down and aim for the biggest I can see. A moving thar at three hundred yards or more is quite beyond me, and no answering "phut" comes after my shot; a second after, thar seem to swarm all round the ravine, some jumping up from under rocks, closer to me than the one I fired at, all going like the wind, and, in far less time than it takes to relate, Hira Singh, the tiffin coolie, and a despairing sahib have the ravine to themselves. To add to my woes the sun now goes out suddenly and it gets gloomy and very cold, a heavy thunderstorm comes on, and remembering a big boulder some way back, under the lea of which I hope for shelter, we retrace our steps. We reach it in a terrific hailstorm, drenched to the skin. For two hours the hail continues with an icy wind. In the height of the storm a thar took cover under a rock some hundred and fifty yards below me. I had to crawl out and take my shot with the hail in my face and paralyzed with cold; needless to say, the thar moved on. Finally, after a long consultation with the tiffin coolie, Hira Singh announces that it is quite impossible to get down to camp to-day. It certainly appeared so, the hillside that we had climbed with difficulty was now a sheet

of ice, diversified by precipices. Here, however, I declined to agree. I was stiff all over with cold, and felt that, after a night, I should be stiff altogether. A watercourse was the only possible route, and we started down one. Had it happened to possess a waterfall—there were several not far short of 1000 feet high about here—we must have endeavoured to get back to our rock. There was a foaming torrent now, knee deep, and almost taking us off our legs. Another hailstorm coinciding with an almost impossible place added to our woes. Hira Singh gets across somehow, handing me his rifle, then, giving mine to him, I am about to follow when a shout comes from the tiffin coolie behind, and, looking up, I see two black bears watching us with interest some thirty yards only, above. By the time I had regained my rifle they had shambled off, but, stumbling up to where they had been, I saw one, still close, looking back. I was so cold that I could scarcely feel the trigger, and the muzzle of my rifle was describing circles. I missed him clean, and thinking it over afterwards, I am sure it was as well. It is always risky to fire at a bear directly above for obvious reasons, but under my frozen conditions, and considering the state of the ground, it was dangerous. The bears went off grumbling, and I was so demoralized that I promptly lost further interest in them, and set

myself again to the task of getting home. Our progress was slow in the extreme, but luckily nothing in our watercourse barred our way completely, and just before dark we reached camp. This was the first occasion on which I broke into our small store of emergency whisky, and Hira Singh and the tiffin coolie had their share.

The next day provided an almost more uncomfortable experience; we took much the same direction again, leaving instructions for camp to be removed over to a fresh ravine. No sooner had we reached our point of vantage than we spotted five *herds* of thar; the whole hillside seemed alive with them, one herd, containing some very black-looking fellows, seemed fairly approachable. By diving down and up a very steep ravine, I could get unseen to a spur just beyond which they were grazing. This meant losing sight of them for some time, so I left the tiffin coolie watching them, with instructions to signal to me which way they had gone, should they move in the interval. At the bottom of the ravine I left Hira Singh, and with the utmost caution climbed up without dislodging a stone. All this took about an hour, and meanwhile the clouds rolled up again, so that by the time I crept over the last ridge I could hardly see ten yards ahead of me. Thar, Hira Singh, and tiffin coolie were alike completely blotted out, but the

former were there all right; I could hear them moving all round me in the mist, and occasionally bleating. The rain now descended in torrents on me as I lay hoping for a break in the clouds, which would at once have given me a choice of splendid heads. For two hours and a half I put up with it, then the rain changed to sleet and hail, while the thar had evidently moved on, as I heard no more of them, and I began to feel that lying alone in a fog on the top of the Himalayas, with no very clear idea where the new camp was, and surrounded by precipices, was hardly good enough, and I shouted for my shikara. I was quite glad to hear his answer, and more shouting having produced the coolie, we started off cautiously into the fog. We walked and walked, sometimes coming unexpectedly on impossible places when we had to start off at a fresh angle. There was more discussing of the direction between the shikara and the coolie than I quite liked, and finally darkness made further progress impossible. We all sat down despondently, and fired signal shots in the air; to my great relief, they were answered from hardly a mile away. Nevertheless, we daren't move till coolies, despatched from camp, arrived with flaring torches and escorted us home.

My first thar was obtained in an uneventful way. I saw four or five feeding above me; there

was no means of approach, so I sent the faithful tiffin coolie to make a long *détour* and get above them, then to roll stones down the hill and—see what happened. All this was successfully carried out, and the thar bolted down into a narrow but deep nullah and vanished. Now, this nullah had a kink in it which brought it round below me. I ran down to a place whence I could command it, and saw the whole herd in single file bounding along the bottom at a great pace. Hastily picking one, I got a bullet straight down between his shoulder blades, and had the satisfaction of seeing my first thar roll over.

A more exciting experience was the sequel of a very wet morning that kept me in my tent till 11 o'clock; it then cleared quickly, and under a bright blue sky, with the sun sparkling on the freshly fallen snow, we made a start. We soon saw what we at first took to be a red bear high above us, but it gradually resolved itself into a large, solitary thar. A most fatiguing climb commenced proceedings. We were at a great height, and it was highly prejudicial to my wind, and brought on a giddy feeling after hard work. I estimated the climb at about 1000 feet. Crawling round a spur, there was our friend much higher up, but standing against a precipice that even he couldn't negotiate. In front of him was a patch of gently sloping grass, extending some

thirty to forty yards, then a straight drop of about eight feet. Below this, again, a narrow and steep ledge of shale, then an almost unbroken precipice right down to the Billung torrent far beneath. I could reach the ledge of shale unseen, and once there would be myself unseen from the grassy slope. It was not an inviting task, but I had to try or give him up, so there was no alternative. I got along till I thought I was just under him, then, handing my rifle to Hira Singh, I raised myself till I could look over. There he was gazing straight at me and stamping his foot; he must have heard or winded us, but only seeing my head, he couldn't make out what it was. There was no chance now of being able to wriggle on to the slope, so with as little movement as possible I got my feet into two very secure niches, took my rifle from Hira Singh below and pushed it gently forward, getting my elbows on to the top at the same time. Suddenly it strikes me, will the recoil of my rifle upset my very slender balance and send me backwards? In which case the ledge won't hold me, and I shall be flying through space. Luckily Hira Singh rightly interprets my anxious glance over my shoulder, and, taking up as firm a position as possible, puts his head into the small of my back. Then, concentrating my thoughts on the thar, I aim for his chest and press the trigger. Dropping the rifle immediately

and catching the grass with both hands, I am about to hoist myself on to the slope when the thar lurches forward and then comes rolling slowly down *towards us.* Would he avenge his death by sweeping us all with him? We lay as close as we could against the drop, and presently —flop! over he comes, well clear; seems to rest there a moment, then, with a slide of shale, he is over again, and, with ever-increasing impetus, in another moment shoots over the precipice; one or two crashes from further and further below, the noise of a small avalanche of stones following his course, and all is still, and I breathe more freely.

Right down in the torrent we found him in a fearfully mangled condition, but with head and horns very fairly intact.

Here and there in these desolate regions we came across large sheltered basins covered with very green, short grass, and gay with innumerable familiar wild flowers — primroses, cowslips, and gentians. These basins were usually tenanted by large flocks of sheep, guarded by wild-looking men of a Mongolian type of features, with layers of thick clothes tied on to them with coarse ropes. On sighting one of these flocks, my men would sit down afar off and shout; no nearer would they go till the shepherds had secured the Tibetan dogs that guard the sheep. I had the opportunity to study one or two grand specimens of this breed

at a close though respectful distance; their size appeared at least equal to any of our largest breeds. The colour of those I saw was entirely black, their coats were of the heaviest description, while the neck and chest were covered by a huge ruff of hair. Their deeply lined faces, fierce sunken eyes, and massive jaws gave the impression of dogs that wouldn't appreciate a jest. The bushy tail is curled over the back. To add to their natural advantages, they were armed with broad metal collars, furnished with a double row of spikes. The natives generally had a pair with the flocks, and said that the latter were then safe from the attacks of even leopard or bear. I was anxious to secure a good specimen of this breed, but, as far as I could find out, they are only bred in the monasteries of Tibet, and they never part with a bitch, and rarely let a dog out of the country. I did eventually secure a dog pup, and on my return to Mussoorie left him with the Meerut fox-hounds to return to the plains with them at the end of the hot weather. By then he was already very large, and according to the kennel huntsman, who I fancy was not sorry to be rid of him, could pick up and shake any hound in the pack. He refused to recognize me again at first, and was a terror to my native servants, so the first night I gave him a rug and tied him up at the door of my bedroom. Returning somewhat

late from the mess, I forgot this, and nearly trod on him. This caused a terrible disturbance, and my apologies not being accepted, I decided to get in through another room for a change. Next morning I was rudely awakened by the upsetting of my "kitmagar" with the early morning tea. We afterwards established more satisfactory relations, and he became quite safe with white men and others he knew, but I really felt quite sorry for unknown black intruders into my compound. He was always rather a white elephant, as it was impossible to take him to the polo-ground or anywhere. He never grew to the great size I have seen them, and lacked the ruff round his neck, so I found he was not pure bred. I kept him six months at Meerut, and meant to take him home, but he couldn't come to the shoot I did *en route*, and I thought that arriving by himself he would cause alarm and despondency in a peaceable English household, so I eventually gave him away in India.

In the more sheltered valleys we came across some pretty little villages. One of these, Gunge by name, was a fair size and boasted a temple. The people here seemed quite unused to the sight of a white man, and I find the following entry in my diary: "Inhabitants unintelligent; crowded round camp with eyes and mouths open, and had to be driven off with sticks"—a procedure that I

shall not attempt to defend. Round this village were quantities of trees hollowed out for bees, and we obtained some very good thick honey. A leopard trap was another curiosity I saw here. The animal was intended to creep into a hole over which were planks supporting heavy stones. The bait was tied to a pole supporting the planks, so that when he tried to drag it away the whole "outfit" came on the top of him, crushing him. I couldn't quite understand a leopard entering such a suspicious-looking place, but it was soon explained. A patriarch said he remembered a man being caught while tying on the bait. Another called to mind a dog being crushed. There was no legend of a leopard being a victim.

Another village we came across was Sela, once one of the residences of a white man who amassed a large fortune by leasing the Gurwal forests from the rajah, and floating timber down the Billung, Bairgraithi, and other mountain torrents to the Ganges at Hurdwar. This was a much more civilized little town, and still bore traces of its white occupation. The natives brought us some small, hard apricots, from the effects of which it took me some days to recover.

I have not mentioned the rain much lately, but it was always with us, except when it hailed or snowed; we lived in a sodden condition and camped perpetually in mud. One of my last

experiences in the higher peaks is perhaps worthy of mention. I was sitting one morning on the steep side of a very narrow ravine watching a "thar jugger," opposite; the latter was a continuation of precipices and ledges. Presently a small bear came walking along a ledge; he never saw nor winded us, and when opposite was barely 200 yards distant. I dropped him "in one." For a moment I thought he would stay on the ledge, but he just slipped over, only to be caught up across a projecting rock some twenty feet below; had he had a kick in him, he would have gone straight to the bottom, but luckily was stone dead. I now discovered for the first time that that very valuable man, the tiffin coolie, was wound round with rope. We soon unwound him, and—fortune was on our side that day—found a stout tree just above the bear, and almost on the ledge. Round this we fastened one end of the rope, and Hira Singh, descending hand over hand, tied the bear up with the other, and then we all three hauled him to the ledge. Had he been a little bigger, we should have been done.

We returned by the Bairgraithi valley and passed through some lovely gerou forest, without seeing a stag, however. A native showed me a picked-up horn (single) of the following extraordinary dimensions: Length, 39 inches; girth of beam, just below bez tine, 9½ inches, being

slightly greater than the beam above the burr. The presence of the bez, which frequently occurs among the gerou of these regions, is the reason I use their native name instead of calling them "sambur." I wished to secure this horn, but it was in the possession of a native forester, who had orders to keep all horns for his sahib.

When nearing Tehri again we met a native clerk, a "babu," in the employ of the forestry, I think, who kindly informed us, "There is much deers on the tops; but I, myself, am never went."

Crossing the lower hills, 8,000 to 10,000 feet only, I had the luck to bag the best gûral I ever shot, and we both got some smaller ones. Winwood came off with the best thar, a magnificent old "jula."

No sooner had we reached Mussoorie than the weather cleared up, and the once more far-distant snows smiled serenely at us.

CHAPTER VI

BUCK AND BOAR ROUND MEERUT

August, in the plains of India, is by no means a pleasant month; its chief advantage is that, owing to the great heat, parades and general stables are got over early, leaving the heat of the day for rest. My rest I took in expeditions after black buck. We used to go out two together, one taking the shot while the other was ready to ride the buck with a hog spear, if he didn't drop at once; by this means no wounded buck was allowed to escape, and we got some good gallops. On August 4, two of us drove out some twelve miles, after our duties had been got through, and, bagging a good buck apiece with a young doe for the pot, were back in time for dinner. A few days later I saw a very fine light-coloured buck some ten miles out from Meerut; he was feeding in some high grass. I dismounted and took my rifle, but directly I was on foot I lost sight of him. Mounting my pony again, there he was chasing some does round and round under some trees. I fixed

his position by these and again dismounted, but again had a fruitless search. Finally, it came on to rain, and I retreated into a wood for lunch. About 3 p.m. it cleared up, and I started two coolies to drag a rope through some high sugar-cane, hoping to put a buck out. While this was going on, I spotted my light-coloured fellow again. I had much difficulty in getting near him, as he was surrounded by very alert does, but at last got a shot at rather over 200 yards, and bowled him over. His horns measured 19½ inches straight, which is good for those districts.

In the middle of the month, E—— and I drove out twenty-one miles to a place called Harpur. E—— fired first shot at a good buck, and though he showed little sign of being hit, my confidence in E——'s rifle was such that I immediately started with my spear. I bustled him along as fast as I could, and he gradually began to come back to me. When I was within ten or fifteen yards, however, I realized that my pony was beat, equally so was the buck, and we both gradually declined to a slow canter, all my efforts to get within spearing distance being futile. At this stage I heard E—— coming up behind, so riding a little wide I managed to edge the buck round to him, and he, taking up the running, speared in a wood. The bullet, a ·303, had passed through

a fore leg without breaking the bone. We had a second though shorter ride soon after.

Next morning we soon sighted a herd, all bucks. I got to within some seventy or eighty yards of them, and had beautiful broadside chances; but the longest horns appeared to belong to one that was lying in a fold of the ground, with only his horns visible. While waiting for him to get up, a native came along and sent them off so suddenly that I never got a shot.

The next buck to appear was standing out in the open. We tried to get up on either side of him, but after watching us from afar he gave two or three bounds and went off in a cloud of dust behind some crops E——'s way. I gave him up for lost; but E——went on, and I soon heard a rifle shot, followed by an unmistakable "phut." Jumping on my pony, I galloped round, but the buck was down. The bullet had hit the top of his skull, knocking off both horns, but hardly inflicting a wound. He apparently was only stunned by the shock, for on E—— plunging his hunting-knife into his heart, he jumped up and struggled for a second before succumbing.

Shortly afterwards we saw a real big herd, and it being my turn, I stalked to about 150 yards and lay watching them. A very pretty picture they were, no less than five real velvety-looking black fellows among countless fawn-coloured does,

alternately chasing the latter playfully, and driving each other away. One grand-looking buck monopolized most of the ladies, and walked among them in a lordly way, none of the other bucks venturing near him. To give the younger fellows a chance, I put a bullet into him at the first opportunity, and no riding was necessary.

E——. had the next shot, hitting a nice buck in a small herd. He went away and we both started riding. After a short burst he was joined by three more bucks, and all four rounded a sugar-cane plantation not thirty yards ahead of me. Directly I was round, there they were, still in a bunch; but after a long chase none of them seemed coming back at all, while one I saw was a doe, whereas they had, I was almost certain, been all bucks. We pulled off quite puzzled, and rode back to the sugar-cane, where alone I had had my eyes off them for a moment. Here we found tracks of a buck leading in, so we rode through, and sure enough put up the wounded fellow, who gave another run and eventually charged a cow, which upset him, and we speared. He must have slipped into the sugar-cane just ahead of me and turned out the doe.

After a rest and drinks, we started again. I was now "in the box," and presently saw a buck a long way off. This lot proved to be another

"kali wallah" (black fellow), with a large following of wives; the number of the latter made the stalk a long and difficult one, but it proved successful, and I was rewarded with the best buck of the day—19 inches.

It was now 2 p.m., and, as we had two bucks each, we had lunch and returned to Meerut. The heat was so great that two of the buck were bad and unfit for food when they got in.

Towards the end of the month I got up to Mussoorie again to have another try in my favourite haunts. I toiled over the hills very fruitlessly this time, but had one bit of luck to keep me going. I saw a gûral feeding far above me, and sent my shikara and coolie to try and drive him down. I was sitting on the side of a nullah, and made sure he would come down it. They got above him very skilfully, and sure enough down he came, but leaping down the opposite slope at a fearful pace. When he was just opposite me I whistled, and he pulled up dead to listen, giving me a broadside shot at about 150 yards—rather far for me with such a small object to aim at; but rather to my amazement I dropped him dead in his tracks. He was a fine and very old buck, his teeth were nearly worn away, and one horn had been broken, either fighting or by a fall, I suppose. I took a skin-curer with me on this trip to save time, and I suppose

this was the reason I got so little. A case of counting one's chickens before they are hatched.

Strangely enough, my next buck also had one horn missing. He was a black buck I got from Meerut. I saw him grazing with some does a long way off, and didn't notice anything wrong; eventually he lay down to one side of the herd, and crawling up on that side I got a shot at 200 yards. They all galloped off; but, pursuing with the hog-spear, I came on my quarry very sick in some long grass, and finished him. He was a very heavy and very black buck; one horn, particularly thick, measured 19½ inches; but the other was a stump 3 or 4 inches long only.

One more buck incident in October. Two of us were out as usual, and my companion was stalking a buck. I hid my horse and syce in some trees, and, strolling on a bit, lay down in some high grass to watch proceedings. The stalk failed, and the buck came galloping in my direction, slowed down to a trot, and then stood staring at my sun-hat, which was about all he could see of me over the grass. Apparently it annoyed him. It *was* a very old and dilapidated affair, I freely own. He stamped his foot impatiently as if to say, "Take that beast of a thing away." But the sun-hat never moved. He came on a pace or two, shaking his head in a threatening

manner; but the hat remained obdurate. Eventually he came to about forty yards from me, and how much nearer he would have pursued his investigations will never be known, as, fearing he would take sudden alarm, I shot him.

Not long after this I had to take a journey to Deolali,—known to the soldier as "Doodle Alley"—with time-expired men of my own and other regiments. We were detained at various rest camps *en route*, and I got a little shikar at each. At Jhansi I made my first acquaintance with the chinkara gazelle. On arriving at Deolali, I was told I must stop there a fortnight, but managed to reduce this appalling sentence to two days, returning to Meerut just in time for the races and polo tournament.

At the end of November I had an extraordinary mishap. I started late one afternoon to ride a buck I thought had been hit. After a long gallop, he appeared to be going as strong as ever. I accordingly pulled off just at dusk, and soon after got benighted and lost. There was no moon, and it was black as pitch. Riding along in what I supposed to be my direction, I suddenly found myself between two bullocks. It is hard to write what happened, as it all took place in a moment. The bullocks were going in the opposite direction to me, and their heads were against my knees on both sides; that was all I could see of them. My

horse began to back; I hit at a bullock with the butt of my spear, and the beasts broke into a heavy canter, my horse trotting *backwards* for a second, and all keeping level. It was a weird sensation in the dark, and I began to wonder if the sun had been too hot for me, when my horse reared and came over, the bullocks fell too, and I crawled out of the tangle, feeling myself to see what was broken. Luckily I was intact, and heard my horse snorting not far off. I easily secured him, as he was standing sweating with fear. I had dropped my spear and favourite pipe, and though I returned to the scene of the accident, and lit all my matches one by one, I never found them, and saw the bullocks no more. I fancy the explanation must have been that a native, according to a somewhat frequent custom, had left his bullocks to trot home yoked, and the yoke must have got across my horse's chest. With the beasts pressing forward in their fear, a spill was inevitable, and I had much cause for congratulating myself on escaping with only a bruise or two.

Another buck on the last day of November provided no special interest, except that, being unable to get near him, I did, for me, rather a fine shot, getting a bullet through his heart at 210 yards.

On December 10 I began pig-sticking, the

meet on this occasion being only twelve miles out, but we had no sport.

On January 13, 1897, four of us drove out to Gurmuktesar, on the Ganges, in the brake, being followed by a fifth on a bicycle. Reaching our destination in three hours, we met our ponies and rode over the river on a bridge of boats, camping at Tigri, well known in the annals of the Tent Club. Next morning we made a start with three elephants and sixty beaters, but they beat the rushes and high grass unsuccessfully all day, only two boar being set going, one of which saved his bacon.

The next morning provided a boar that more than made up for several indifferent days' sport. I first heard a great shouting of coolies, but there being several spears between me and the scene of the commotion, I didn't at first ride up. Presently an elephant moved over; still, nobody started riding. Being quite puzzled, I now cantered along, and saw the elephant being urged to enter a patch of grass which he was strongly objecting to do. As I got up I saw Winwood, of my regiment, lean over and hit at something with the butt of his spear, and in another second a huge boar dashed out at him. For some reason he had declined to move till he was hit, and Winwood very sportingly had refused to give his point to an immovable pig. His spear now,

however, came round like lightning, and met the boar's onslaught without, however, checking him in the least, and in another second horse and rider were on the ground, and the boar away past them and into a wood. Here we four remaining combatants lost him temporarily till one of us came on him suddenly round a tree; another ferocious charge followed and the boar, jumping up, sent a fourteen-stone man and a big horse over like a nine-pin, getting a spear broken in him as he did so, but gashing the horse. We now got him on to some more open ground, but he was such a monster that no one could spear and hold him. We had to adopt the somewhat low-down tactics of dashing at him from behind, spearing and galloping on to circle round and charge again. A good spear soon finished him, and he sank and died without a sound. The dimensions of this gallant boar far exceed those of any boar I ever saw killed in a pig-sticking country; they were as follows: height at withers, 33 inches; weight, 248 lbs.; length, 6 feet 2 inches. Another good boar, 31 inches, succumbed before lunch, while the day's sport was concluded with the death of a 32-incher. All these boar weighed over 180 lbs. Truly a day of monsters, though No. 1 far eclipsed the others, and we were all glad that Winwood, who had so sportingly set the ball rolling by giving him the butt, had

got his spear round in time to draw first blood.

The next day I was lucky enough to get the only two spears that were taken. The first was a fine boar, which I speared, but before I could spear again he took refuge in a thick clump of grass; as there were more horsemen coming up, I galloped straight on to see he didn't sneak out behind. The next sportsman arrived shouting, "Where is he? Where is he?" I was about to explain when piggy took it upon himself by dashing out, rolling the sportsman over and cutting his horse badly. The man fell clear, but the horse fell right on the boar, and before the latter could regain his legs, two of us had him pinned. I was riding a very good horse most of that day, a 14.2 Arab called Peacock, as he was a showy little chestnut with long mane and tail. He was the worst hack I ever rode, always fidgeting along sideways, crossing his legs and pecking on to his nose, while I bought him after he had pretty well demolished a trap. Strangely enough, though, he took to pig-hunting at once, and would follow a line of beaters as quietly as a lamb, picking his way over the rough ground most carefully, cocking his ears whenever the coolies began to shout, and ready to be off at a pressure of the legs. A child could guide him till he saw the pig, and then he could guide himself. He would

follow every "jink" entirely "on his own;" and fear, he had none. So marked were these traits in his character, that even if the meet was only a mile from the camp, and I meant to ride him first, I would have him led on to the line and hack another horse there. He would be such a nuisance on the way, though good as gold directly real business began with the starting of the beaters.

Three more boar, a fine parah stag, and a barren sow completed the record of this most successful meet. Barren sows bring their fate on their own heads by carrying tushes, and in such cases the usual fine of champagne all round for sticking a sow is remitted. There were none of those serious mishaps that so often mar the pleasures of pig-sticking on this occasion; several horses were gashed, but nothing that a few stitches couldn't put all right.

On January 23 I took the train to Delhi, and, after sleeping at the station, drove out the next morning to Alipur, ten miles on the Muttra road. Here I met a horse and a camel that I had sent on from Meerut by road. The camel, with a good "oont wallah" (camel man), is a useful auxiliary on these occasions; he does not alarm game, and from his commanding height the oont wallah can well search the surrounding country; also, the oont can carry more lunch and

drink than a tiffin coolie, and can also take an unlimited supply of venison, etc., home. I saw some find herds of black buck my first day, but was only able to bag one.

Next day I made for some low, rocky hills, the home of the chinkara gazelle, the real object of my visit. These hills were very bare, cover there was none, and the "chink" were almost unapproachable. In the morning I kicked up a wolf almost at my feet, but starting off at top speed he was out of sight, over a ridge, before I could get my rifle to my shoulder. Late in the afternoon a very long stalk, *ventre à terre*, resulted in an indifferent chinkara, and with this I had to be content, as though I toiled all the following day till I had to drive back to Delhi for an evening train, I never got another chance.

About this time I had a horse "cast" from my troop at the earliest possible age limit. This horse, C. 104, was a "waler" (Australian), with a well-shaped frame, but for years he had been a great trouble to me and my troop-sergeant, as, despite an allowance of food far in excess of the regulation, he never could be induced to put on any condition whatsoever, and the first long day in the field reduced him invariably to skin and bone. I tried putting a trumpeter on him, but the extra galloping entailed thereby more than nullified the advantage of the lighter weight. Remedy after

remedy was tried with no effect. He was the sort of animal that seemed to dwell, as you might say, in the eye of an inspecting-officer to the total exclusion of my other well-conditioned steeds. He was a find! Just what they were looking for, and was regularly discovered. "Look at that horse! Where's the officer commanding this troop?" And—unpleasantness was always caused. With all this he was sound, fast, and handy, and I had an idea that, with his military duties knocked off, the minimum of work to keep him fit, and the substitution of myself with hunting-saddle and hog-spear, for a dragoon with his weighty paraphernalia, he might yet do me a good turn or two, to make up for all the trouble he had brought on me. Accordingly, to make a long story short, at the next auction of poor old "casters," one with a half-clipped coat, and bits of rags judiciously tied round his really sound legs, was bought by a disreputable-looking nigger for thirty rupees—under two pounds then—and that night C. 104 was in my stable.

At the end of January five of us went out after pig. The first day we beat alongside the "Bora Gunga," an impassable morass, one of the old beds of the Ganges. Two good boar and a parah stag gave us short bursts, but all gained the swamp; on our crossing by a ford we induced a third boar to break for the rideable country, and

I got him on Peacock. Another pig was directly on foot, but, on getting to terms, he proved too small, so was allowed to save his bacon. Two of us, slowly riding back to the line, then put up a fine boar, which, after a long chase, we killed. Peacock was now just settling down to his work, and started merrily a few minutes after on the track of a parah stag. No one else was up, and I had a grand gallop for about a mile and a half, as I estimated; then, when within sight of his point, the "Bora Gunga," I felt I had him beat, and, closing up, leant over to spear. The stag "jinked" to the right; Peacock turned with him; my right stirrup-leather broke with a snap, and I was sitting on the ground, watching my gallant little Arab follow the stag alone till both were hidden from view in the tall reeds bordering the swamp. It was useless wandering on foot into the quicksands hunting for him; besides, the line was a long way off, and I had to return, or I should have missed it altogether, so I hoped for the best, and walked disconsolately back. Peacock, I may here mention, was standing in camp when we returned that night. This was the more extraordinary as, till the night before, he had never seen the place.

I only had my second charger, whose *metier* was not the chase of the pig, and C. 104 now with the line, so gave the latter his first turn, and was hardly in the saddle when three of us got

off after another boar. C. 104 soon caught him, but imagining him to be a new form of tent-peg, to which game he was accustomed, took me past him with a rush; the next horseman also missed his spear, and the third got the coveted first prod. On our way home we put up a "sounder" of pig with several fine boar; unfortunately we all started, through some mistake, after the same one. He escaped in the Borga Gunga, and the result was *nil.*

As I wanted to deal very gently with C. 104, I started to ride him in the cool of the morning next day, intending to change horses soon and send him back to Meerut by easy stages. We again had a beat in the vicinity of the Bora Gunga, and a fine boar soon broke immediately in front of me. It was "up to me" to stop him before he reached the sanctuary; but this I just failed to do. I then rode the old horse back to the line, and called for Peacock. At that instant, however, a second boar broke, and the same performance was repeated. Feeling very annoyed at this double loss, I now determined to get on my fresh steed, and cantered back for the purpose; nearing the line, however, I almost rode on to a grand boar, and there was no choice but to pursue him in his turn on C. 104. This was a heavier pig, and with a great effort I came up with him barely twenty yards from the swamp. Here he

squatted in a bush with such suddeness that C. 104 cleared bush and boar in a bound, and was almost in the Bora Gunga before I could stop him. Another spear stuck and held the boar in the bush, and as I was now between him and the swamp, we had him safe. He made a grand fight; two spears, including my own, were broken short off in him. My horse was quite blown, and not being able to move him quickly, I had him rather badly cut in one of piggy's charges, though, fortunately, not in a dangerous place. We nearly lost him after all; there were only three of us up, two had their spears broken, and the third couldn't induce his beast to face him. Luckily, two more horsemen arrived in the nick of time and finished the job.

I now at last got back to the line, changed horses, and—never saw another pig all day.

We drove back to Meerut that evening, well satisfied with our sport. One of our party discovered his bungalo had been burnt in his absence, and a heap of ashes was all that remained of his worldly possessions in the East.

In February we had another most successful pig-hunt. The first day out we accounted for six boar and a good parah stag, of which I was lucky enough to secure two boar and the stag, all on Peacock. Another boar should have fallen to my share. The coolies were dragging a rope through

some high grass, two of us only were on one side when a boar broke in front of us and headed straight across a beautiful open "maidân" (plain). My companion got foul of the beaters' rope, and I started alone. Unfortunately I was for the first and last time on a sluggish mount, bearing the distinguished name of Artaxerxes, and, despite all my efforts with spurs and the butt of my spear, piggy gradually increased his lead till he disappeared in the distance, leaving me covered with shame and mortification. The parah led three of us a long dance, joining *en route* a whole herd of stags. I counted four on foot, for certain, and I believe there were many more. One of us took after a fresh buck, but lost him; the other two stuck to the original, and speared in an arm of the Ganges, the stag being out of his depth when we did so.

Next day yielded three boar and another stag, also numerous tosses, as the country was intersected by blind nullahs. A fine wild cat was speared; he sat down after a very short run and glared at the horseman. The third day we only got one boar, which gave us a long, jinking run, letting in one after another. I was first away, but lost my place; however, after three or four spears had had a burst, I got in again when he was beat, and speared. A fine stag, with only one horn, was killed; his horn measured 16 inches and carried four tines,

which is one in excess of the regulation. Another parah behaved in a most unaccountable manner. Two of us saw him standing in front of the advancing line; we galloped at him, but he remained absolutely immovable, and we came to a deadlock, one each side of him. Naturally, we couldn't spear like this, and in due course the coolies came and surrounded him. We thought he was very sick, and allowed a coolie to cut his throat; subsequent examination, however, found nothing amiss with him, and the matter was never afterwards explained in any way.

The three days' meet resulted in ten boar and four parah stag.

The competition for the Kardir Cup, the great pig-sticking event of the year, was due to commence on March 22. Seven of us went out on March 11, to beat up some rather hilly country on the confines of the Kardir, with the double purpose of enjoying some sport ourselves and driving the pig down to the more rideable country. Directly the line started on the first day, I got away after a boar on Peacock. I lost him in some reeds, but immediately saw two spears riding something beyond. Never doubting it was my boar, I put on best pace to join in. One of them, however, signalled "Sow" (spear held horizontally reversed), and I tried to pull Peacock up quickly to get back to where I had

last viewed my boar. At that instant a precipitous drop and hole appeared across our front. Had Peacock had his head out he would have somehow saved the situation; but, alas! I had his head up, and in another moment, down and head over heels we went. Peacock was up in a moment, and, having no boar before him to follow, stood. I was up, too, but on trying to mount found I couldn't use my left arm. As I subsequently discovered, my collar-bone had gone in two places, in addition to a dislocated thumb. This ten days before the Kardir Cup! I am not presumptuous enough to think I should have had much chance; but I had two horses entered, and one of them, Peacock, was as good as any he could meet. I was very efficiently bound up by my comrades, and returned to Meerut, partly on a pad elephant, and partly on an "ekka," the rough, two-wheeled, country cart. It took from 1.30 p.m. till just after midnight to get home, and what with the jolting of the cart, which made my broken bones grind together, and the cold at night, I was pretty miserable by the time I rang up the orderly at the Meerut hospital.

Out of the seven of us present at this pig-hunt, five were damaged, and two laid up in our bungalows, while the Kardir Cup was run off. A third, our popular hon. sec., Mr. Gillman, R.H.A., broke several fingers, but was just able to hold a

light competition spear at the big meeting, and won the cup against forty-five horses. The finish of this 1896–97 season showed 110 boar and 16 parah stag killed; and though the records had been kept continuously since 1866, no year up till then had seen more than 96 boar speared, while our parah were ten in excess of the previous best.

A panther was also bagged with the spear later on, and I believe gave all concerned a very warm time, even taking a ride for a bit on the quarters of the hon. sec.'s horse.

This finished my pig-sticking, and with it my Indian "shikar" for good, and the beginning of April saw me still with my arm in a sling, starting for Bombay to collect my stores, etc., for an expedition to Somaliland.

CHAPTER VII

SOMALI

The first week of April I was busy at Bombay collecting stores for my next hunting-trip, full of eager expectations as to what my first expedition to Africa might produce. Everything was done up in wooden boxes: two—one to be slung on each side—making up a camel-load. I put in each box a bit of everything in the way of necessaries—biscuits, tea, sugar, salt, etc.—so that I should only have to open one box at a time; the few luxuries I divided indiscriminately, so that they should come as surprise packets. Shortly before sailing I was joined by Captain—now Major—Eustace, of my regiment, who had elected to throw in his lot with me in Somali.

On April 10, 1897, we sailed from Bombay on the P. & O. *Ganges*. My collar-bone was still stiff and painful from my fall in the Kardir country; but, luckily, it was on the left side, so that it didn't interfere much with my using a rifle. After an uneventful voyage we reached Aden on the 15th; here we had to undergo five

days' quarantine, owing to the plague which was raging in Bombay. The *Ganges* was, fortunately for us, returning to India, so while the other passengers transferred themselves to the *Arcadia* for home, we did our quarantine very comfortably on the ship. Except for the catching of a 6-feet shark, nothing of any interest occurred, and on the 20th we were released and went on shore.

Aden is not a popular resort of tourists, and the hotel accommodation is, or was then, very indifferent. Our rooms were full of Mark Twain's "chamois" and game of larger dimensions, while the heat was intolerable. We called on the General Commanding and on the Political Resident, and were warned by both to keep out of the way of the Abyssinians, who were then raiding Somali territory; and, worse still, we were made to promise not to cross the eighth line of latitude, which cut us off from much good elephant and rhino ground.

I had taken the precaution of writing on beforehand from India to engage a headman, who, in turn, was to engage "boys," *i.e.* personal attendants and hunters, and to start buying camels. Three Somalis turned up at Aden, and said they were respectively two "boys" and a hunter. The headman was at Berbera, across the gulf, buying camels.

On the 23rd we got off on the ss. *Woodcock*, which we had hired from Cowasjee Dinshaw, a Parsee merchant in Aden. Our start was most exciting. The Somali is not a gentleman who cares about parting with his money if he can help it, and those who cross to Berbera either for trade, to get jobs, or from pure curiosity, always try to "sneak" a passage each way on the cheap if possible. Crowds of them invaded our vessel at starting, all claiming at the top of their voice to be our servants. We had definitely engaged seven only, and as they most of them looked very alike, we had much difficulty in spotting the right ones. Eventually we separated the right number of men we thought we recognized, and the skipper, amid a babel of confusion "chucked" the rest. All this happened right out in the harbour, and as quick as some were shoved down into boats, others clambered up on all sides. During the height of the confusion, a pony appeared hovering in mid-air over the ship; it had been swung off a boat in a crane. We had bought no pony, and a heated discussion ensued between the now nearly demented skipper and the yelling horse-owners in the boat, which was only terminated by one of us, out of pity for the poor pony, declaring it was ours, and could be taken on board. It was accordingly lowered into the hold. We might have claimed it at Berbera to give them a lesson; but

on landing it disappeared as mysteriously as it had arrived. Finally, as we were slowly moving off, a large Somali, who had been trying to smuggle himself through a port-hole from a small boat, with loud cries of "Allah," fell into the sea. I suppose he had paid his boatmen, as they took not an atom of notice, but rowed away, and we had to stop the engines, lower a boat, and fish him out. So he got his free passage after all.

The less said about the voyage the better. We were very glad at 9 a.m. to see Africa. First, the grand outline of the Goli mountains, and then the Maritime hills between the Golis and the sea. Finally, rounding a point, we were at Berbera at 11 a.m.

We put up at the travellers' bungalow, a clean little place, and presently interviewed our headman, Ahmed Warsama. He had only got nine camels, but said he would soon get the others from the hills. There are no camels at Berbera, as there is no grazing for ten miles round, only dust, sand, rock, flies, and awful heat. We had all our meals with that most hospitable of residents, Captain Merewether. The next few days were spent waiting for camels and trying to satisfy the exorbitant demands of our headman, Warsama, who we found was charging us far too much for "herios" (camel-mats), water-casks, and

everything he could. This might have been borne had he only produced camels more quickly; but on the fifth day he had only got twenty-six—not near enough, so we decided to leave some things to be fetched on, and get clear of Berbera. Before leaving the town, we paid a visit to an Austrian, who was collecting beasts for Austrian zoos. He had some ostriches, a half-grown lion, two lion cubs, some young leopards, and a cheetal.

At the last minute we found that Warsama had filled the caravan with his own tribesmen. Now, no caravan was allowed to have more than a certain number of men from each tribe, so that there should not be too much cohesion amongst them. We had armed all our men with Sniders from the Aden arsenal, and they would have been a formidable body had they chosen to take part in any of the constant tribal fights, or to break away and perhaps do for us. This, then, was a very serious offence, and Warsama was promptly deposed and sent to jail, while on my return I had him struck off the list of headmen kept at Berbera. I subsequently have found out more about his previous and his later history, which it may be of interest to relate. A year before he came to us he was out after lion with a friend of mine, Captain Macdonald, of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders. A lion charged home, and Warsama, who was carrying the spare rifle,

made a clean bolt of it with the usual result—the lion turned on him, bowled him over, and caught him by the leg. Macdonald was unable to shoot as lion and man were too much mixed up. He accordingly ran up and belaboured the lion till he turned, and then shot him dead—a performance that reflects great credit, but *not* on Warsama. He afterwards became one of the Mullah's chief advisers, and he may have had some scheme for securing our rifles for the subsequent rising. Anyway, we were well rid of him. He was succeeded by one, Abdi Adan, and though another day had been wasted by this jostling, we were sick of waiting, and getting out of Berbera at 5.15 p.m., made twelve miles, and camped at Chefto—though why it was Chefto I couldn't say, as there were no houses or anything to distinguish it, only sand and thorn-bush, perfectly flat, and stony over the sand. My bed had to be left behind, as there were so few camels, most of which were laden with rice and dates for the men, and water-casks. In the end we got through with only three or four more camels, making about thirty in all, I think, as our consumption of provisions, both ours and the men's, about kept pace with the extra loads of heads, skins, etc.

It may be of interest to note down the full strength of our caravan at starting. The "duplicate" men were to enable us to separate

without inconvenience. One cook had been in an officer's mess at Aden, and far excelled the other. He was known as the "fat cook," and was held to counterbalance the headman, so that whoever took the one resigned the other.

Strength of caravan:—One headman; two "boys" (full-grown men really); two cooks; one head camel man; thirteen camel men; five spare camel men; three syces (grooms); four hunters; to which were added various people *en route*, such as a boy who attached himself and cooked the men's meals, and a sportsman who brought us a present of three sheep, and asked to be allowed to hunt with us.

Our weapons were:—One single-barrel ·303; two double-barrelled hammerless ejecting ·500 Expresses (these were our main stand-bys); one 10-bore rifle; one 12-bore rifle; one 8-bore gun that took bullets; one single-barrel ·350; two 12-bore shot guns. The 8-bore gun was rather a fraud. I bought it from an advertisement in the *Pioneer*, wherein it claimed to have shot elephants; but as on its arrival "Not for ball" was printed in large letters on the barrel, I never dared to use it. I would have returned it, but was in a hurry.

We had three ponies, purchased in Berbera for rupees 150, 150, and 55 respectively. They were rough, hardy little brutes, and, with the addition

of another purchased up-country, saw us through well.

Every one has experienced the delightful sensation of waking up the first morning in a new place. I shall never forget my waking moments the first time I was clear off into the wilds of Africa. We had not bothered to put up tents overnight, and I was lying on my back on the sand, looking up at the still dark and star-spangled sky, with the grunting of camels and an occasional hoarse cry from our waking Somalis to remind me where I was, and that we were at last off, cut off from civilization, with no worries, good rifles, and one of the finest hunting-grounds in the world before and around us. The fat cook produced some cocoa at about 4.30 a.m., and by 5 our long string of camels were moving off in the dusk. It got light and hot all too soon. However, every mile now we were getting higher up, and before 9 a.m. we had done twelve miles. The country was still deplorable, only stones, sand, and low thorn-bushes. Riding away to one flank of the caravan I put up several "dik-dik," the smallest buck on earth, weighing less than a full-grown hare. I also saw some lowland gazelle; but stalking was well-nigh impossible from want of cover, and though I dismounted and had a long shot, it took no effect. Aoul, or Soemering's gazelle, were also sighted. We rested in the heat of the

LEAVING CAMP AT DAWN.

day, and pushed on another twelve miles in the cool of the evening. We camped by some wells; the water was sandy and full of leeches, but all right after running through a filter.

The next morning we made a great effort, and, marching from before 6 a.m. till midday, camped at last in beautiful scenery at the foot of the Goli range. The heat was now tempered by pleasantly cool breezes, and the aspect of the country entirely changed; the bare sand had given place to a thick jungle of aloes, while just below us was a watercourse with clear pools here and there. I went out about 4 p.m. with my ·500 Express, and at once saw two of the remarkable long-necked gerenûk looking at me over the aloes; only their necks and heads were visible, and while I was trying to see something bigger to aim at, they took alarm and disappeared. Strolling on a little further, I saw three beautiful koodoo does walking slowly through the aloes above me; they saw me, and, after a moment's pause, were off. Another second, and a buck came flying the bushes in their wake; I threw up my rifle and fired as he disappeared. I feared I had missed, but thought I had heard the bullet tell, and sure enough, eighty yards from me, there he was, shot through the quarters and paralyzed; another minute, and the poor beast was out of pain, and we joyfully returned to camp with his handsome

skin and plenty of meat. His head was fair, but nothing particular.

The next few days we pushed on more slowly, as the climate was now delightful, and crossing the Goli mountains, we were surrounded by beautiful scenery. For the benefit of any who may know the country, I may mention that we left "Gan Libbah," or "the Lion's Hand" peak to the east, and passed by Abdullah to Sik, which latter was the first place since leaving Berbera that I considered justified in having a name at all; it possessed some water-holes, but otherwise was as indistinguishable from the surrounding country as the other places I have mentioned. Here we found signs of game being very plentiful at certain seasons of the year, though fresh tracks were in the minority. We were now well over the mountain chain, but the drop on this southern side is very slight, the land stretching out in a great plateau. Directly under the Golis there is thick bush and fine trees; this had given place at Sik to transparent thorn jungle.

We camped by the water-holes at 8 o'clock one morning, and after breakfast I started out to see what game might be on foot. I very presently came suddenly on a great wart-hog; he started up just in front of me, and we stood looking at each other. It was my first view of one of these most weird-looking creatures, and

my interest and curiosity made me forget my more murderous objects. He wagged his distorted-looking head, with its great gleaming tushes, up and down at me for a few moments and then turned, and, stiffening his tail till it stood bolt upright, trotted off, seeming after the manner of pig to be moving very deliberately, but really travelling at a great pace. After some fifty yards he stopped, turned round, and, as I remained perfectly still, recommenced wagging his head, and advanced again with short runs towards me. It now occurred to me what a fine trophy he would make, but my slight movement bringing my rifle up determined him, and, turning round, up went his tail, and he vanished at once.

I next saw some gerenûk, but couldn't satisfy myself there was a good enough buck, and with all my shoot before me, I was not going to shoot at anything not quite up to the mark. A whole "sounder" of wart-hog then crossed my front, followed by another splendid boar. I did have a shot at him under the bushes, but couldn't see him very well, and he trotted away unscathed, and having thereby scared the jungle all round, I returned to camp. That afternoon we marched again in heavy rain, a precursor of daily torrents that we endured for the next three weeks, which was uncomfortable, but greatly facilitated our movements in the

generally waterless country we were about to enter.

In two more days we were in comparatively open country interspersed with clumps of thorn bush, and here aoul, wart-hog, gerenûk, and Spekes gazelle were plentiful. We had now done about eighty miles from the coast, and pitched our camp for a couple of days, making, as from now on was always necessary, a high zeriba of thorn bushes round the tents, and the ground in front whereon our camels were driven to sleep at night. We dug holes and filled them with waterproof sheets to catch the rain, so as to keep our water-casks full. We did not over-exert ourselves, as there was no very important game about, and, saving our ponies mostly for harder work later on, we strolled about, trying to get some good specimens of the gazelles we came across. My first afternoon I saw some gerenûk, and a careful stalk brought me within 100 yards of them. The only buck appeared to be a youngster, so I contented myself with watching them, and a very pretty sight they were, rufus red in colour with white, pure white, bellies, and shaped just like miniature giraffes. They were standing under bushes, stretching their long necks up to reach tempting morsels on the higher branches. I tried to see how close I could get, and was, I suppose, only some fifty yards from

them when I was spotted by a wary doe. I saw at once that I was "given away," and collapsed in the grass with as little movement as possible; the gerenûk stared hard, then "advanced by rushes" at me, stopping after each rush for another stare, the others watching her with mild astonishment in their large eyes. At about twenty-five yards she must have got my wind or something, for, without warning, down went her long neck and they all trotted silently off, stooping down till hidden by the bushes.

Eustace here bagged two nice Spekes gazelle bucks, and I got a doe, by mistake of course—but the does have horns, and are almost indistinguishable. I missed two or three shots; notably, one at another large hog. My hunter, Hassan, consoled (?) me by saying, "Never mind pig run away; when you get to libbah (lion), he run to you." "Awful fun if I'm going to miss," remarks my diary.

On May 5 we did two long marches. I missed a good gerenûk in the morning; but worse was to follow. At about 4 p.m., when riding through some bushy country, I saw a troop of grey animals, looking like horses, with horns growing straight up to a length that made my mouth water; they were some way off, but all staring intently in my direction. I stayed motionless for a minute, but as they didn't seemed scared,

thinking evidently that they were safe at such a distance, and not seeing us clearly, I gradually worked myself out of the saddle, and, leaving Hassan and my pony for them to look at, I doubled myself up and ran under the bushes round to a flank where, by screening myself behind a big tree stem, I was able to get to 150 yards from the herd. I then sat down, got my breath, picked out the finest bull, and —missed him clean. No "phut" signalled a hit, but I heard my bullet go singing away into space. The oryx, or Beisa antelope, for that is what they were, crashed off into the bushes, and I began to wonder of what use all my trouble and expenditure were if I couldn't shoot straight when the time came. This, however, was the end of my misfortunes. The next day, after a short march, I stuck a bit of paper on an ant-hill, and soon found I was firing high. Whether Somali is not so clear as India, and caused me to overrate all my distances, or whether I had contracted an evil habit of taking in too much foresight, I never satisfactorily cleared up, suffice that thenceforward I did not miss many shots.

In case of any trouble in the interior, we gave all our escort shooting practice here with our fifteen Snider rifles. We let them shoot at the top of a large biscuit-box 100 yards off for four

annas a hit, and though over twenty men fired, it only cost us a rupee (sixteen annas).

We were now fairly out on the great waterless Haud, and on the northern edge of the Toyo plain, all rolling grass, not a bush visible for miles. The rains, however, had only just begun; the grass was dried up, and no game was visible. A month later it was a very different story. Some sport was even then to be had, however, and going out in the afternoon, I had got about two miles and a half from camp when I saw a large, yellow-looking animal moving in some high grass—that is, grass about four feet high; it was generally quite short, but attained this height in patches. I took a shot at the fore-end of the beast, hoping it was a lion, which it was not; but I found I had rolled over a most magnificent wart-hog. I had come out on foot, and no Somali will touch a pig, I therefore had to cut off his head and carry it back to camp—no light job—while next day I had to dig out his tushes, which were well over a foot long and massive in proportion.

On my return home I had these tushes mounted, back to back, with a small lamp for lighting cigars, etc., in the middle, and presented them to the Fifth Dragoon Guards mess. Eustace had also been in luck to-day, bagging our first oryx bull.

The next day I got another Speke's gazelle

at seventy-two yards; but, unluckily, again a doe.

A six-hours' march took us across the Toyo plain, and we began to see sparsely scattered bushes once more. We saw several greater bustard on the plain, but no game until nearing the southern border, when we came on several large herds of aoul, twenty to twenty-five in a herd. They were wild, but after some trouble I got a shot at rather over 200 yards at a buck. The whole herd galloped off, but one soon dropped back, and E——, coming up, we walked up the wounded buck in some grass, and he administered the *coup de grace* with a ·303 rifle.

I soon after fired at a fine buck, end on, at 120 yards, and broke his leg; he went off, and I was about to mount my pony to ride him down when a big fox appeared on the scene, and commenced running on the blood trail. Hassan and I laid down to watch, and the buck ran round and round us in a big circle, with the fox at first running with his nose on the ground, and then with his head up, running in view. I was sorry for the poor buck, but thought the fox could do the job probably as quickly as I could myself, and it was most interesting to see. It took over a quarter of an hour, and then the fox pulled him down behind a bush. At this point I mounted, and, galloping up, secured the head and

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AOUL GAZELLE.

[*To face p.* 104.

skin, while the fox laid down a short way off and watched, returning to his well-earned meal the very instant I rode away again.

That night a Somali galloped into the camp with the joyful news that three lions had visited a village three hours' march away. Accordingly, next morning we moved on to the village. By "village," be it understood, I mean nomadic encampment. We had only seen occasional wandering Somalis before, so were interested to see something of the people. We found a confused crowd of Somalis, camels, and sheep, all clustering round a water-hole which was reduced to a filthy little mud puddle, at which the whole lot, men and beasts, seemed to take it in turns to swallow the pea-soup mixture all day. It was impossible to get our water there, and as our barrels were low and we were all on very restricted rations of drink (washing was "off"), we sent five camels to a pool forty miles away, where heavy rain had been reported, and five more to another pool ten miles distant. The Somalis had a few rough huts up, constructed with a few poles covered with camel-mats. They were very friendly, but a nuisance, as they crowded round our tents all day; and as they are light-fingered gentry, we had to put sentries on and keep our zeriba clear. The lion reports were rather misty, and as there was no other game so close to an encampment, we

spent an uninteresting day. A fine-looking Somali rode into our camp, looking a great swell with his flowing "tobes," wiry pony and ornamental spears. He brought four good sheep with him, and, after presenting them, said he wished to hunt with us, and that if we were full up he would come for only his keep and fill any vacant place that might occur. We took him, and he proved a great success.

The second morning after our arrival at this water-hole two joyful events took place. Firstly, our camels came back with water; and, secondly, a Somali came galloping in to say that the lions had been again located, or rather had located themselves by bursting into a karia (encampment) twelve miles away and carrying off two sheep. This always rouses the Somali. Lions frequently follow karias, and seize on stray camels, donkeys, sheep, goats, etc., which the Somali looks on as their perquisites; but when they get too bold and come right in, it becomes a matter of life or death, as the next victim may be a man, and they band together, all mounted, and have a go in at him. I understood, though I never saw one of these hunts, that they daze him with their numbers, their shouting and their galloping, and gradually get closer till they are able, as they charge round him, to throw their spears with effect. A good horseman on a good mount *that is already galloping*

can almost always avoid a lion's rush, so the game is a tolerably safe one.

We started at once, and after a twelve-mile ride we reached another liquid mud-hole and another encampment just similar to the last. The lions were further on; a man was said to be even then watching them, so leaving word for our caravan, which was following us, to halt by the karia, we rode on.

At 3.30 we got on to the fresh tracks of no less than five lions; two miles further on we found a Somali in a tree. He said the troop had laid up during the heat of the day in some very thick mimosa bushes we had just passed; he had watched them from a respectful distance. About an hour before our arrival they had got up and strolled on; he had followed, but one of them had spotted him, or so he thought, and he had taken refuge in the tree, and hadn't cared to come down again. Had we known more about it we should now have stopped, camped fairly close, and had a whole day next day at the lions; we should probably then have accounted for the whole troop. We, however, pushed on, following the large and never-to-be-forgotten lion spoor. It was a quarter to six in the evening, and the sinking sun was already throwing long shadows everywhere. I was just thinking it was about time to be getting back,

if we were not to be benighted in the jungle, when a lion walked slowly between two bushes some forty yards only ahead of me.

My first impression of a lion in his natural state will always remain very vividly with me; he bears about as much resemblance to the caged beast as a man who had been shut up between iron bars for years, perhaps for all his life, might bear to the most perfectly trained athlete whose days had been spent in the open air and in the hardest forms of exercise. The suggestion of strength and activity was almost appalling, and for a moment I found myself wondering how such a beast could be killed, and almost wishing myself well out of it.

I forgot to mention that five well-mounted Somalis were following us some 500 yards behind; we were on foot. A whistle brought up the horsemen, and, spreading out in line, they galloped on; they viewed him immediately, and marked him down in a very heavy clump of bush. They then lined up beyond the bush, while Eustace and I advanced straight at it. Slowly, with rifles cocked, we drew near, and were within ten yards, and I was almost hoping he wasn't there when, with a fearful snarling roar, he was out. Bang! bang! went our rifles, and he was in again. He now kept up an incessant and most unnerving roaring, while all I could see was his tail that he was

lashing vigorously. I had another shot at what looked like lion, and Eustace also gave him one more, always reloading the right barrel and keeping the other ready for a counter attack. A crash, and he was out the far side of the bush. We dashed round, and as we ran, heard a horseman galloping up, singing the death song they always break into when a dangerous beast is killed. There lay the lion stone dead, with a bullet hole in his chest raking him. He measured 10 feet 5 inches from his nose to the tip of his tail, and was the biggest we shot. Leaving Eustace and his men to skin him—there was no time to waste as it was nearly dark—I hurried on to another bush where another lion was at bay. He wouldn't show himself, and though I fired a shot in, there was no response but deep, rumbling growls. I accordingly, holding my rifle ready and a box of matches too, walked right up to the bush to try and burn him out. One of my hunters, whom I always called Spots for reasons subsequently related, betrayed great concern at my near approach to the bush, and just as I had reached it, actually seized my arm and tried to pull me back. As I didn't myself think my position as safe as might be, I allowed him to do so, and, taking me some fifteen yards from the bush, he told me to wait there, and himself took the matches. I imagined he had some device for lighting the

bush without going right up to it, but not a bit. No sooner had he got the match-box than he coolly strolled up with only a spear and began kindling a fire. Of course, I advanced again and guarded him with my rifle, but he had been quite prepared to do it without. Unluckily there had been too much rain, and only the top of the clump would burn, while it was now 6.30, and I realized that it was too dark to see my sights properly; also, there were four lions in bushes all round us, so we reluctantly gave it up, and, mounting our horses, started for camp. We did not find it at the water-hole, the head-man having for some reason halted some way off, and the end of it was that we rode about in the dark, shouting and firing shots till about 11 p.m. before we got in. Very minor discomforts, however, when one has bagged one's first lion.

That night we were pretty tired, and as all our men assured us that the lions would be certain to clear out of the country after their bustling, we decided to send horsemen out at daybreak to reconnoitre and to await their report. Of course we ought to have gone ourselves, but when one gets to bed dog tired at about midnight, one is apt to listen to advice *not* to rise again at 4.30 a.m. Well, at 9 a.m. next morning back came the horsemen to report that at least half a dozen lions were in the same spot, and the carcass of the

dead one had disappeared. In five minutes we were off, and a two-hours' ride brought us to the scene of the last night's kill. Fairly fresh lion spoor was crossing and recrossing everywhere, but so confusedly that it was impossible to tell how many lions there were or to determine their whereabouts. The horseman had not actually seen a lion that morning, and we were inclined to think the tracks had been made during the night and some hours previous to dawn. We soon found where the carcass had been, while a broad mark in the sand showed where it had been dragged into the bushes. The lions were evidently hungry and savage, hence their cannibalism and their previous attack on the thickly populated karia. The dead lion had been dragged into a densely tangled thicket. There was nothing to be done but to crawl down the tunnel made by the passage of the lions and their dead brother, with the prospect of meeting an unlimited number at any turn. I really was glad to reach the scene of the cannibal banquet, and to find the banqueters gone —nothing but a few bones left. There was still a chance of their having lain up after their meal in the bushes close by, and here our horsemen displayed great pluck; shouting and waving their spears, they galloped into bush after bush till their ponies could force their way no further, but all to no purpose. Eventually we, hunters, horsemen

and all, formed a sort of cordon of sentries all round the country where our quarry might yet be lurking, and waited, hoping that after the heat of the day they might show themselves or give us fresh tracks to work upon. We never, however, saw a trace of them again, and I am sure they fell on the carcass directly we had left it and, contrary to their custom of lying up after a meal, cleared straightway out of the country.

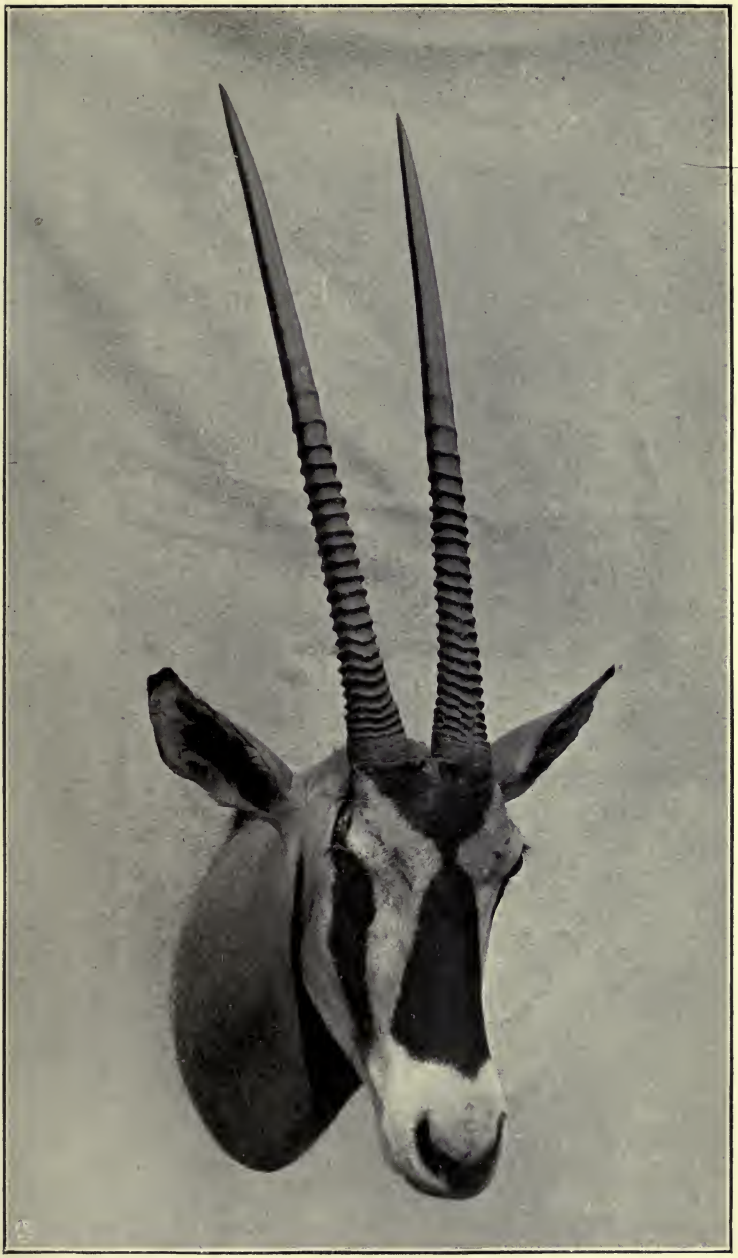
We hung about for a day or two near the Somali karia, hoping for more lion and busying ourselves with our skins and heads, about which the wet weather which continued made us rather anxious. It was uninteresting work, and hearing oryx had been sighted about a day's march away, I, who had not yet bagged one of these splendid trophies, bade adieu to Eustace who had, and rode off one morning in quest. I took as much in the way of rations as my hunter and I could carry without camels, and promised to return when I had got what I wanted. I started at 5.30, and at 7.30, while riding slowly through some of the usual country, thick bushes varied by open glades and big stretches of open plain, I saw my hunter, who was walking just in front, collapse suddenly and lie watching something. I glided off my pony as noiselessly as possible, and not daring to even whisper to know what he had seen, I crawled after Hassan through the grass. As I

went I could hear a heavy animal moving in a thicket to our right, and we reached the edge at the same moment as a splendid oryx stepped out only sixty yards from us ; another second, and out stepped another. I fired at the first, and hearing my bullet "tell" loudly, I turned my attention to No. 2, who was racing away over the plain, and with my second barrel got him right through the back of the head, sending him over like a rabbit. No. 1 paused for a moment at the unwonted behaviour of his companion, and reloading I shot him again, this time through the heart, breaking his shoulders as well. My first bullet had got him a trifle high in the body. How a few seconds change everything when big-game shooting! one moment riding along wondering if I should ever get an oryx, and the next having two dead almost on the top of each other. Hassan had just time, and only just, to dash up and cut their throats before they breathed their last, otherwise all the meat would have been wasted, as no one adheres more strictly to the "hallal," or throat-cutting, than the Somali, and any beast not killed by a Mohammedan he will not touch. We loaded my pony with meat, and I walked home, getting back five hours only after setting out. One of the oryx had a horn of 29½ inches, bent right down from 8 inches above the base, so that it came straight across his face. I suppose

it was caused by an injury through fighting when young.

Oryx bulls are exceedingly pugnacious, and with their long rapier-like horns would inflict frightful wounds on one another were it not that Nature, stepping in, provides them—the bulls only—with circular patches of thick hard skin covering their withers. These are greatly valued by the Somalis as shields, ranking only second in value to those made of rhino hide. I put them to more peaceable uses as tea-tables, in which capacity they look well, as they take a very high polish.

While on the subject of oryx shields I will mention a peculiar incident, proving their strength or the rottenness of hollow bullets, which you like. I might add, though, that this was the one and only occasion to my knowledge that a hollow bullet—explosive, as they are called —ever "sold me a pup" on this trip, though I never used them with dangerous game. I had ridden a heavy oryx bull, and bayed him under a tree. I jumped off my pony, and went in with my rifle to finish him. The rifle was a ·500 Express, a hammerless ejector by one of the best makers, altogether the best rifle at the time that money could buy. Going, perhaps, a bit close to my bull, he suddenly lowered his head and leaped at me. My rifle was all ready, and I gave him a bullet just



ORYX BULL.

[*To face p.* 114.

over his lowered head that should properly have flattened him out. It didn't at all. Before I could fire again I had to jump for my life, and either my jump landed me clear of the sweep of his vicious horns or he was staggered by the bullet; anyhow, I got off, and, turning round, dropped him with the second barrel. I took off his head and shield, but couldn't see my first bullet. Some months after, when my shields were being prepared for ornamental purposes, they were paring away the top side of one to get a flat surface to polish, when lo! a flattened-out bullet in the middle of it. It is still there, firmly imbedded, to the confusion of those who disbelieve this story.

A word more about oryx. It has been told before, but no matter, I have seen it going on all over the country, so I may be excused for relating it again. In wet weather, when oryx sink deep in the soft sand, the Somali runs them down. He will follow the spoor of a heavy bull at a steady trot for four or five hours, when he bays him and dispatches him with his spears. Not infrequently he is caught by the quick rush a cornered bull will make, and then he hunts no more. I think it is Gordon Cumming who relates how a gemsbok, almost identical with the oryx, has been known to kill a lion, both being found dead together, the lion transfixed by the sharp, long horns. Truly

the oryx may be classed, in the words of an ancient French naturalist, as "Un animal très méchant, quand on l'attaque il se défend."

For some days we now moved south again by easy stages. There were plenty of oryx and Soemerring's gazelle—or, to call them by the shorter Somali name, aoul—about, but we always confined ourselves to shooting only picked heads, and gradually got more and more exacting as to what was really worth having. This was quite enough to keep us in meat, and to add a bit at times to our men's ration of rice and dates. Once I shot a young aoul buck by mistaking him for something else in some high grass, and we found him so exceedingly toothsome that we hereafter allowed ourselves one a week, to be shot alternately. Our camel-men caught an aoul kid alive one day; he was not weaned, but took readily to one of the goats we had to give us fresh milk. He was quite a pet for a bit, but was a great trouble to transport on the march, and—well, I'm afraid one day we ate him.

The rain meanwhile steadily got worse till our tents, etc., were so sodden that they were too heavy for the camels, and we had perforce to halt. I never heard anything like the Somali rains: a dull roar begins, which gets louder and louder till the deluge is on you. One afternoon, about 3.30, I was out hunting when it grew quite dark,

and the most fearful thunderstorm burst on us. There was a great ant-hill, eight or ten feet high, with a sort of cave at the base into which my hunter and I beat a hasty retreat. I noticed a strong smell which I thought I recognized, and on Hassan exclaiming "Libbah" (lion), I remembered the lion house at the Zoo. His hairs were all round, and I fear we had caused him the inconvenience of going out into the storm to make room for us. He can have only just left. It was hopeless looking for him, as the rain was washing out spoor as fast as it was made.

For five days and nights it rained almost incessantly. We continued to pop out whenever it cleared a bit and have some sport. One day I got into a regular clump of game. I saw oryx, aoul, and gerenûk, a herd of each in a small glade. There was a very fine oryx bull, but in trying to stalk him I put up the gerenûk. These trotted off quickly and silently, as is their custom, without disturbing my quarry. They, however, approached and alarmed the aoul, who in turn galloped into the oryx, and I got nothing. This, however, was my only bit of bad luck about this time.

Our tent, a double-fly Indian one, had by now given it up as a bad job, and let in streams of water. Three nights running it came on in a

deluge about midnight and lasted till midday next day. Draining the tent in the loose sandy soil was impossible, and as I had no bedstead, but was sleeping on the ground, I always lay in pools between soaked blankets. I, however, slept very well; but as never once all this time did we get any chance of drying anything, it got somewhat irksome. Eustace began to feel the effects of it, while my first hunter, Hassan, was quite knocked up, and did not get over it for a fortnight, when, as he was still very "groggy," I sent him on a camel back to the coast. Midday on the fifth day the rain stopped, so we brought out all our clothes and bedding and arranged them on store boxes in the feeble sun to dry, for which purpose also we ourselves sat on a box apiece, clothed in damp—wringing wet, in fact—pyjamas. Scarcely was this satisfactorily arranged when in came a Somali with the welcome shout of "Libbah." He had seen a lion four miles off, he said. We were soon into some damp clothes and started off; the four miles, however, got longer and longer, and at half-past four he said we were still two miles away. It had now commenced to rain again in torrents, and the light was very bad; also, the cartridges of my lion-rifle, 12-bore, were paper ones—great mistake this—and so swollen by damp that they wouldn't go into the rifle, so we gave it up, much to my second hunter, Spots'

disappointment, as this was *his* show in the absence of Hassan, incapacitated. Riding home, my pony gave me a fall in an ant-bear hole, as if I wasn't wet enough before! Our spirits, as well as our bodies, were now considerably damped, and Eustace on our return took to his dripping couch rather knocked up, and was unable to hunt next day. I was, luckily, still perfectly fit, and the next day was to be the red-letter day of my life.

I will give it a chapter to itself, a chapter written two or three years back for the *Badminton Magazine*.

CHAPTER VIII

THREE LIONS BEFORE BREAKFAST

"SPOTS" was very excited, but then Spots' reputation was at stake. Spots overnight had taken me many weary miles after lions that he declared as we started were "no be too much far away." We had eventually been overtaken by darkness and a thunderstorm, and had returned to camp wet to the skin without seeing any signs of our quarry, whereupon I had unjustly told Spots that I didn't believe there had ever been any lions about; I also mentioned that in my opinion he was an idiot. Great was his triumph, therefore, when, at about 7 a.m., a native came to tell us that lions had been roaring round his zeriba, some five miles from us, all night. Spots, I should mention, was my Somali hunter, so called because it was a nice short name, and he seemed to answer to it, also incidentally because his black woolly head was interspersed with snow-white tufts as if he had had a series of terrible shocks at some period of his career, or perhaps they were only

caused by youthful dissipations; however, let us leave moralizing over Spots' head and return to our lions.

It was a beautiful fresh morning after the rain, and we were soon in the saddle heading for the "karia," as the temporary native encampments are called, from which the lions have been heard. A cool breeze was blowing, the country was looking its best with the young grass just showing up; "aoul," first cousin to the South African springbok, were dotted about everywhere, alternately grazing as if they had not a moment to lose, and then chasing each other across the plain; the jolly little dik-dik, the smallest antelope known, darted out of every bush; a couple of oryx were seen watching us suspiciously in the far distance; while, as we neared the "karia," the wild game gave place to camels of all sizes, looking horridly bored as only a camel can, and eating thorn-trees and such-like dainties.

Arrived at the "karia," Spots engaged in conversation with every one at once and drank bowls of camel's milk at the same time; the whole population of the "karia" turned out, and all seemed to have a lot to say about the lions, till one very stout old lady wore them all down and continued the story by herself, interspersing it with terrifying roars, which roused Spots to the wildest enthusiasm. After considerable delay my hunter,

full of milk and information, remounted his pony, and we jogged off, accompanied by three very dressy gentlemen with flowing "tobes," spears, and all quite well mounted on their hardy little Somali tats. I own I thought they would be rather a nuisance, but, as the sequel will show, they were quite invaluable. We had not long to wait before seeing a confirmation of the old lady's tale. High up in the heavens we saw vultures circling round yet never coming down, which was a sure sign that, first, there was a kill below them; and, secondly, that there was something by it that they dare not approach, something more to be feared than a fox or a skulking hyena; there was only one explanation, my lord the lion was dining! Now came an anxious time. Spots and I dismount and stalk slowly through the thin bush, guiding ourselves by the vultures above, but at the same time keeping an exceeding wary eye on the bushes below. Why does the bush insist on getting denser at these critical moments? We had been in quite open country just before; it seems very unreasonable, though the reason in this case is not far to seek, as naturally lion would be more likely to kill in close cover than in the open.

Suddenly—for, as it seems, the very briefest fraction of a second—I see three great yellow beasts, and a moment later can scarcely believe

I ever saw them, so quickly have they vanished; but there lie the scanty remains of an oryx, and running round a bush I see a lion pass at a dignified walk between two bushes about 100 yards off—no time for a shot. Spots meanwhile has whistled, and in another second up dash the three attendant horsemen, and without drawing rein they turn in obedience to a wave from my spendid little hunter, and are off shouting and flourishing their spears after the lions. We follow at best pace along the tracks, nor had we long to wait before seeing one of our men galloping to and fro (this to get a flying start in the event of a charge) and pointing with his spear at a bush some 200 yards from him. The lions, lazy after their feed, had not gone far before coming to bay, though only one had been marked down as yet. I could just make her out lying crouched, as if for a spring, in the thicket with her head lowered between her fore paws, and every now and then raising it to give vent to ugly snarling roars as she saw me approaching. With the eyes of my Somalis upon me I had to pretend to be valiant, whatever my feelings might be, so I walked straight up to within thirty yards of her, finger on trigger and momentarily expecting a charge, sat down and shot her dead through the neck. A very tame ending, but, considering possibilities, quite exciting enough at the moment.

No time was wasted. Hastily covering the dead lioness with branches to screen her from the prying eyes of the ubiquitous vultures, we started off again on the two remaining tracks, our horsemen falling back again to some 500 yards in rear. Scarcely half an hour had elapsed before we saw the footprints with a little hole in the front of each toe, which told us that their claws were out; also showing that our game was very close, had heard us, and was inclined to show fight. The country was here considerably more open. Spots went at a sort of jog-trot along the tracks with his eyes on the ground, I keeping abreast of him, looking out for the lions and with rifle ready.

The bushes gradually ceased altogether and an open plain stretched ahead; on the extreme edge of it was very dense bush, and when some 300 yards from it, I distinctly saw a great yellow form moving on the far side. A whistle brought up the horsemen, and they galloped on to the plain, opening out meanwhile, and giving the thicket a wide berth; then followed shouts from the men and a terrific roaring, from which I surmised that the lions were chasing my sportsmen on the plain. However, I knew that they were well mounted and the lions had dined heavily, so I didn't anticipate any casualties, and thought the great cats would soon get bored, and would then probably head

A FINE LIONESS.

[*To face p.* 134.

back for the big bush. I accordingly ran as fast as I could to get into it first and give them a warm reception.

I had nearly judged the situation accurately, but unfortunately one of the lions came back sooner than I had anticipated, and I was still some fifty yards from the bush, running somewhat out of breath, and with my rifle held at the "trail," when with a crash a huge lioness cantered heavily through, saw me straight in her path, and after being bothered by the horsemen, evidently thought this the last straw, and lost her temper completely.

I saw in a flash a most awful expression of rage come over her massive face as she suddenly changed her pace, gave several coughing roars, and came full at me, stretching along the ground like a greyhound, in the midst of a whirl of sand.

I threw up my rifle and fired without using the sights, then slipped my finger on to the rear trigger, ready, if necessary, to give her the second barrel down the throat at close quarters; but the roars had given place to snarlings, the sand-cloud rolled off, and there she was five yards and a half off (subsequently paced), broadside on, with her "near fore" in her mouth, worrying it; the second barrel was promptly brought to bear on her heart, and at the report she rolled over stone dead. So close had she come that I was covered with the

sand she had thrown up, and deep marks showed where she had slid along the ground in pulling up from her great pace. I had nearly missed her, but luckily I was using a heavy 12-bore rifle with, I think, as much as eight drams of powder, and the shock, although the bullet had only struck her low on the leg, had made her forget my existence at a moment when I hardly wished to be remembered.

Spots insisted on shaking hands over her corpse, which accomplished, we covered her up and hurried on in the usual formation, following the tracks, now reduced to only one. A couple of the horsemen had pushed on after the third lion while we were busy with No. 2, but had missed him in the bushes; they accordingly fell in behind us again.

No. 3's tracks led presently into a very dense patch of bush, round which we worked without finding any spoor leading out, so I fired a shot in at random and promptly evoked a regular "feeding-time at the Zoo" roar, while a fine lion sprang half out of the bush, looking as if he meant to eat both of us. It was, however, only bluff, and he was in again before I could draw a bead on him; this he repeated several times, the while I slowly advanced on him and the horsemen galloped round behind to cut off his retreat. I must own that his sudden appearances

and terrific roars were very alarming, but Spots followed me up so close that retreat (had I wished it) was impossible. I do not believe his head was *quite* in the small of my back, but I know he was whispering, "Kill um, kill um," "One, two, dree," in a manner meant to be very encouraging and chuckling with delight the while. When ten yards only separated us from the bush, our friend leapt forth again with such a gurgling roar that I involuntarily recoiled on to Spots, nearly upsetting both of us; at the same moment I brought my rifle up, and this time, encouraged, I suppose, by my step back, the lion stood for a second in full view, then crouched, and in another moment would, I believe, have been hurtling through the air but for my bullet that caught him, in the nick of time, full in the chest. Instead of springing he reared himself on his hind legs, caught a bough above him in his teeth, snapped it in two, and toppled over sideways into the bush.

I foolishly dashed at him rather too soon, and as I stooped to get a better view of him under the boughs, he suddenly sat up again on his quarters with a snarl, and I was so close that I had to put my rifle against his great head and blow his brains out, somewhat to the detriment of his skull.

Great hand-shaking was now the order of

the day, our three horsemen joining in, after which we had a pull at our water-bottles and proceeded to skin lion No. 3, then, riding back to his wives, performed a like office for them in turn. The return journey by the karia was a veritable triumph. Spots and his three pals galloped furiously in circles with their "tobes" streaming in the wind, waving spears, and singing extemporary songs. Arrived at the karia, we all drank camels' milk, and I proposed the health of the old lady, whose information had been so useful, in suitable terms, which nobody understood, but which Spots, who seemed to think I was doing quite the correct thing, translated—I am afraid rather freely, as the old thing looked very coy and fled to the karia amid roars of laughter from the bystanders. We reached camp at about 11.30 a.m., having been gone just about four hours; and only those who have killed three lions before that time in the morning can appreciate the feelings with which I sat down to breakfast. I wonder if Spots ever thinks of that red-letter morning? He was a capital fellow, bolder by far than a lion, and a good sportsman all round. He had three wives, all looted from neighbouring tribes, whose *raison d'être* was to look after his numerous camels, all obtained in like manner. In fact, looting, I fear, may some day be his undoing.

I am sure he must have had something to do with the fighting that afterwards took place in Somaliland; Spots wouldn't be left out if he could help it. I wonder if he fought for us against the Mad Mullah, or *vice versa?* Perhaps he is the Mad Mullah himself? Anyway, here's the best of health to you, Mr. Spots! May you always be on the right side, and may you accumulate camels and Mrs. Spots as comforts for your old age, without being prematurely cut off in the collecting thereof!

CHAPTER IX

MORE LIONS

The weather had now cleared slightly, the incessant rain giving place to fresh, cool days, with an occasional violent thunderstorm. The ground was in beautiful condition for tracking, the saturated sand holding spoor in such a way that to the initiated the whole country was an open book, faithfully recording the hour at which each beast had passed by. Often tragedies could be exactly followed up—the stalking of a herd of buck by some carnivora, and the place where the final rush took place. Under these circumstances one could pick one's game and make fairly certain of finding it. Between the 19th and 22nd of May we killed five lions and sighted another, which latter, however, saved his skin till four days later; in the interval, Eustace captured two live lion cubs. We might have done even better, but had a little bad luck, in that several times heavy thunderstorms burst when we were hot on fresh lion spoor, and the torrents of rain cleaned off

GERENÛK BUCK.

OLD MALE HYENA.

[*To face p.* 130.

all traces of game, while preparing the ground for fresh impressions. We were very busy all this time, as in addition to lion we got some fine oryx, and I spoored, and after a long stalk flat on my stomach through seas of sloppy sand, killed my first gerenûk buck, which pleased me much, as I always think they are about the strangest and prettiest trophy to be found in Somali.

One lion we got very easily, tracking him to a small bush where I imagine he was having his midday siesta. We were one each side, and on the *qui vive*, so that when he looked out with a roar only fifteen yards from each of us, he promptly got a bullet in the head and another in the heart. Another one might have landed me in rather a tight corner; it was a very fierce lioness. She was sighted just as a thunderstorm broke, and made two or three ugly rushes at my horsemen; as the ponies could hardly keep their legs on the wet ground, I was rather nervous of an accident. It was a weird scene, rather dark, with torrents of rain, vivid flashes of lightning, and peals of thunder mingling with the roars of the infuriated beast. I got a chance at her through some thin bush at forty-five yards and fired; at the shot she gave a great bound, and I thought was coming on. Now, I always used to keep my left barrel for emergencies when possible, so as soon as I had fired I, still keeping my eye on the lioness,

threw open my rifle and tried to reload the right barrel; the cartridge wouldn't go in! Still watching the lioness, who had sunk into a crouching attitude, I dropped the cartridge and tried another; same result! I now snapped my rifle to and lay, with only one barrel, on the defensive. After watching a bit and finding she didn't move, I gradually advanced, and eventually found she was stone dead; I had got her through the heart. These were the afore-mentioned paper cartridges, and they were swollen with the wet. The lioness was 7 feet 8 inches from nose to tip of tail as she lay.

After this last lion, and in consideration of our good sport and the discomforts of the rain, we procured three fat sheep from the neighbouring karia and gave them to our Somali followers, who showed their appreciation by having them killed, cooked, and eaten in about two hours. We ourselves were quite contented with our venison diet, and, indeed, the fat cook served up most appetizing meals: aoul soup, roasted aoul kid, cold oryx with occasional bustards, being fare for a king. The Somalis liked game well enough, but preferred large fat antelope to gazelle, and were rather disappointed at our only killing occasional old bulls of the former. However, we preferred spending a little on sheep to slaying game for our men's pot, and indeed meat was only a luxury for them,

as their ration of rice and dates carried them along very well.

The next excitement was the finding of the lion cubs by Eustace; he spent two days hunting a lioness in some very heavy cover—too heavy to use horsemen. She always kept in a circle ahead of him, and he couldn't get a shot; at last, puzzled by the way she stuck to the same place, he hunted about and came on the cubs. They were not yet weaned, so we milked one of our goats into a kettle, then one holding a lion, the other put the spout in his mouth, and poured till what had been a scraggy-looking little beast was blown out like a football. This operation was repeated twice a day, and, strange to say, they thrived past belief, and very soon were able to eat meat. We made two cages, and hung them on a camel when we "trekked." They accompanied us the rest of the trip, sailed home on a tramp steamer, by which time they were as big as retrievers, and as none of our respective people were anxious to have them, found their way to the Dublin Zoo, where I believe they still are. They were jolly little beggars, quite affectionate and playful as puppies, with heads and feet quite out of proportion to their bodies.

The night of their arrival in camp I was rather alarmed, as their mother was still at large, and we knew that if she could scent them out, nothing

would stop her. We strengthened the zeriba, put on an extra sentry, and made preparations for lighting fires. It was a pitch-dark night, and I could imagine the fearful confusion there would be if she burst in. The Somali is terribly excitable, and they would have been blazing off their Sniders at random. We waited up a bit, but, hearing nothing, went off to sleep, which was as well for our peace of mind, as she *did* get on the trail, and came roaring down it to within a mile of us, when she came to where Eustace's route home had been subsequently crossed by our camels coming in from grazing. Here she had branched off, losing the scent, I suppose.

The next day Eustace hunted her again all day without success, came back in the evening, and, taking one of our donkeys, tied it up near the bush whence he had taken the cubs, and sat over it in a small zeriba. I heard no shot in the night, and started before 6 a.m. to look for gerenûk, as I wanted another good buck. I soon heard three shots in quick succession. Now, this was a signal agreed on whereby in the absence of both of us our head-man could recall us quickly to camp in case of any trouble, or of good "khubber" (news of game) being brought in. I accordingly galloped back as hard as I could, and found Eustace about to leave camp. He had been as much surprised at the shots as I had myself. He had wounded

the lioness in the night, and starting before dawn had tracked her to within a mile or so of camp. Here, foreseeing a long job before him, he gave his hunters a rifle apiece, with instructions to wait where they were, while he rode in unarmed to get some food for himself, send some out to his men, and to exchange the cap he had worn at night for a sun-hat. So far so good. What, then, were the shots? Some camel-men had started immediately on Eustace's arrival with food for the hunters, who were almost within sight of camp, and at this moment came rushing back. One, to our horror, carried Eustace's ·500 Express rifle, open, the barrels choked with dirt and sand, and covered with teeth and claw marks. This, they excitedly related, they found surrounded by lion spoor and—the Somali never minimises things—lying in pools of men's blood; no sign of either of the hunters. In no time we were off, but had hardly ridden a hundred yards when, to our relief, we saw the men, one badly mauled, head and shoulders torn to the bone and covered with teeth and claw marks. He carried Eustace's 10-bore, or what remained of it, as one barrel was blown right off. Eustace, of course, had to go back and attend to him, while I rode on after the lioness. I dismounted near the scene of the catastrophe and walked round the bushes till fearful snarling growls betrayed where she was. I sat down opposite,

and about twenty yards from the bush, with my two hunters, and shouted at her, my first hunter shooting into the bush, hoping to get her to charge across the open. I let my hunter shoot as I had no wish for her to do any more damage, and I thus had both barrels always ready for a charge. I could see nothing to fire at except her tail, which she was lashing vigorously while uttering blood-curdling roars. She would not break cover, so at last I left my hunters to sit where they were, and to continue shouting without firing; meanwhile I crawled away back in the grass and did the quietest stalk I have ever done in my life. It seemed to take hours, with every nerve strung up to concert pitch; but at length I had done what I wished, crawled right round in a half-circle till I and the furious lioness were in the same bush, she still snarling and every now and then roaring at the hunters, and quite unconscious of my presence. Only ten yards separated us (I always paced my distances after a shot); but, as I was lying down, the undergrowth hid most of her, except her head and the top of her back. I suppose it was this, combined with the fact that I was shooting up at her—she was standing—that made me put my bullet a trifle high when, if ever I meant to make certain of a heart shot at ten yards, it was then; anyway, instead of being knocked out she spun round, and for a

second I saw her great chest along my sights, and pressed the second trigger. I remember well dropping my face in my arms almost instantaneously with doing so, and lying there expecting to feel the awful weight on my back, and other horrors that didn't bear thinking about. The thought flashed through my brain that I hoped my hunters were staunch, as I could do no more; and if the lioness were still alive, I had only them to rely upon. A yell from my men, of delight too! Slowly I look up, and there lies a great yellow body motionless. My last shot had penetrated the centre of her chest, and, raking her, finished the job at once.

And now to hark back and explain the preceding events. The Somali, excellent fellow though we found him in many ways, is, to use a schoolboy term, a fearful "buck-stick." Shortly after Eustace had left his hunters, and probably just when he had started off the men with their food from camp, one of them got up, and by his own confession strolled up to the nearest bush, and, seizing a clod of earth, threw it in, shouting a challenge to the lion to come out and face him. Now, considering that the whole country was dotted with bushes, and that they had investigated probably hundreds that morning *without* finding the lion, the probability was enormously in favour of his challenge being unaccepted, and his bit of

braggadocia being harmless enough. It is always the unexpected that happens, however, in big-game shooting. The lioness just happened to *be* in that very bush, and she was at him in a whirlwind. Plucky enough, as after events showed, he must have lost his head, after the manner of most Africans in an emergency. He fired both barrels and hit the lioness, as I subsequently found, in the extremity of the tail. The reports, however, turned her on to the second hunter. He, poor chap, was sitting down peacefully, and didn't realize what was up till, as he afterwards described, he saw the lion flying through the air at him. His rifle was across his knees, but he managed to get it cocked and up, and pressed the trigger at the moment that the lioness lit on him, or rather a fraction of a second after, as the rifle went off with the lion on the top and the muzzle in the sand; hence the blowing off of the barrel. He was then caught up and shaken like a rat. The first hunter was meanwhile fumbling in his pocket for the ample supply of cartridges he always carried, but couldn't find one, the truth being that he was feeling in an empty right-hand pocket, whereas they were all in the left, or *vice versa*, so completely had he lost his head. His pluck, however, did not desert him, and as the lioness was trotting off with his companion, he dashed up and began belabouring her with his

empty rifle, so that she dropped the man and, turning on him again, with one stroke, sent his rifle flying from his hand, and then most mercifully seized that and bore it off a little way, dropping it outside the bush in which she subsequently met her end. The hunters then staggered off, returning to camp by a circuitous route, and not meeting the men with their food, who actually secured the rifle under the very nose of the lioness without knowing she was there. Had the lioness not been weak from the loss of blood caused by her overnight wound, she would almost certainly have killed the lot in succession.

On returning to camp I found Eustace had made a very neat job of bandaging the injured man. No true Somali will ever touch strong drink, and I have no doubt this helped him considerably, added to the fact that he had been living hard on plain diet; anyhow, no complications ensued, though it was some time before he could be moved. Luckily, however, we had almost reached the eighth line, beyond which we had been cautioned not to go, so that although we did go a bit further south, it was only with a flying camp, and we formed our base round the prostrate hunter. By the time we returned he was able to ride a pony, and before we got back to the coast was almost recovered, though he showed ugly white scars, of which, however, he was rather

proud, as indeed he might be, as few men have been at hand-grips with a lion and lived.

I had just sat down to have some breakfast, which, amid all the excitements of the morning, I had not yet done, when in galloped a Somali, with news of yet another lion. Cutting my meal short, and filling my pockets with biscuits, I rode off again. About ten miles out, up rolled a thunderstorm and torrents of rain. We held on, however, but on reaching the place where we were to have picked up the tracks, they were almost washed out; we could only find one here and there, so, after some very slow and laborious tracking, we had to give it up. Riding home, I shot a very fine oryx bull.

Here, in case any one may accuse us of killing too much game, let me say that we generally confined ourselves to old, solitary bucks. These, as a rule, have magnificent heads, but, having otherwise passed their prime, have been driven by younger rivals away from their harem of does, the latter willingly transferring their allegiance to the strongest. Their purpose in life is thus at an end. Deprived of their ever-watchful wives, and with their agility and strength steadily decreasing, it only becomes a matter of time when they will be pulled down by a lion; or, worse, done to death by hyenas or smaller carnivora. How much more merciful, then, that,

having had their day, they should meet with a sudden end by the rifle! Even if a buck be killed in the pride of his strength, and surrounded by his admiring wives, still there are plenty more bucks at hand waiting to take his place. It is the same idea as the killing off of cock pheasants, and even keeping down of cocks among common fowls. There are always too many bucks, and the killing of some, so far from diminishing the increase of the species, has, I believe, the opposite effect.

Again, in our case, we saved the lives of far more than we killed. A lion will, I suppose, kill at least one fat buck a week, if he can't happen on a camel or a man. Thus each lion killed would represent fifty-two bucks a year, at which computation we saved the lives of many thousand. I do not, however, by this mean any reflection on the excellent game laws that are fairly general in Africa now, game laws that I regret to say are, in many parts, more honoured by the breach than by the observance, the unfortunate part being that the sportsman who never would do harm if he could help it rigidly observes, while the wretches whom they are meant to check contrive to evade them.

South Africa always held a good lead for butchery, though little is left to butcher south of Rhodesia in the extreme East, where, I believe, game is now well looked after. As an example of how not to do it, I may here

quote from the experiences of my Somali hunter, Spots, who used to relate with scorn how, a year or two before, he had accompanied a sportsman (?) who couldn't shoot well enough to tackle anything dangerous, but who used to get as close as he could to a herd of buck, and "brown" them for all he was worth—does, young and all—killing insignificant heads, and doubtless letting numbers of wounded escape to die miserably. He once, according to Spots, killed eleven of the beautiful Somali wild ass—beautiful, but almost useless as trophies or even meat. It may be that "Spots" lied; let us hope so, but I know too well what atrocities irresponsible idiots will commit under the name of sport, and can well believe him.

CHAPTER X

MORE SOMALI

We now moved on further south, through country full of oryx and aoul, with a few gerenûk, while two or three days after I saw, for the first time, a "dibatag" buck, very similar in appearance to the gerenûk, but of a cinnamon colour instead of the rufus red of the latter. I stalked him very carefully to sixty yards, when I saw his head and neck very plainly; he appeared to have either heard or winded me, and was staring hard in my direction. Fearing that any moment he might trot off, and thinking the small head and giraffe-like neck too small a mark, besides the fact that in getting him I should damage him as a trophy, I aimed into the grass where his body should have been. Unluckily for me he must have been standing broadside on, with his long neck stretched out and head turned towards me. There was no answering "phut," and with a whisk he was gone for ever. That day, for the first time, we both came on ostrich spoor.

On the last day of May we emerged on a great open plain. Since crossing the Toyo plains, and seeing but little game thereon, we had had, and were not likely to forget it, torrential rains; these had caused the young grass to shot up, with the result that the game had streamed out of the bush in myriads to graze. This plain was one moving mass of aoul, reminding one of the accounts of the sights that met the eyes of the early South African hunters. I had already some good aoul heads, though doubtless, with this bountiful choice, I could have improved on them. However, I spent a very happy morning by leaving my pony on the edge of the plain and stalking right into the middle of the herds, where I lay basking in the sunshine watching them. Of course I alarmed a few when I was moving, but when in such numbers I always found they, to a great measure, lost their timidity. Thus two or three would gallop off, and meeting a few more, they would all trot to the next lot, who in turn would perhaps only look up and stand motionless for a bit, when all would recommence grazing unconcernedly. When lying still, it was amusing to watch them reconnoitring one. They would graze close up, then the sharp eyes of a doe would detect something unusual in the grass; she would "freeze" and watch. Next, the "boss" buck of that party, with perhaps one or two rival bucks,

would leave their mutual disputes and come forward by little runs, shaking their horns and trying to look very ferocious, with great stamping of feet — showing off before the ladies. Closer and closer they would come till suddenly it was as though they said, "Oh, good Heavens! it really does look dangerous, though," and, turning round, would scamper off, hustling the does and leaving them to look after themselves, till they had got through the herd, when they would stop, turn, and begin showing off again what fine fellows they really were in an emergency. The finest bucks would put their noses in the air, and, laying their horns right back, walk round and round a select circle of admiring does till an amorous young buck would come too close, when down would go the head, and in another moment the youngster would be scouring the plain with the lord of the harem in hot pursuit.

Late in the morning I saw a very fine oryx; there were many about among the aoul, but this one was such a whacker that I couldn't refrain from having a go at him. The aoul round him kept on giving him the alarm, and though he never once, to the best of my belief, saw me, three stalks failed. During the fourth I was nearly within range, when again an aoul spoilt my chance. This time the oryx was thoroughly alarmed, and vanished at his best pace in a cloud of dust. The

aoul, a solitary buck, did not go far, but stood looking back over his shoulder, and it suddenly struck me that he was by far the finest aoul I had ever seen. I gave him, therefore, the bullet I had intended for the oryx, raking him at 130 yards. On getting up I found that I was not mistaken; I had got a prize. I measured his horn twenty-one inches, which would have placed him at the top of Mr. Rowland Ward's list of horns and horn measurements for aoul. Unluckily, either his horn had shrunk a bit by the time I had got him home, or my tape expanded in the genial Somali warmth! he did not really top the tree, though he took a very honourable place.

That afternoon I saw my first ostriches. Now, I had always been led to understand, since nursery days, that the ostrich, on seeing the hunters, buries his head in the sand and imagines he is concealed, while the hunter lights his cigar, strolls up, and shoots him in the opposite end. This arrangement must have been made, however, without consulting the bird, as of all things they are the most difficult to approach. The Somali kills or captures them by two devices. One is to get a tame female bird and tie her by the legs with a long cord; you then sit in a bush till a wild cock-bird turns up and begins to make overtures. The hen is then drawn gradually towards the bush, followed by the cock, till within range

of rifle or poisoned arrow, as the case may be. This method I never saw tried, and so many *contretemps* may arise, the cock-bird not turning up for one, that I never wished to try it. Another way, which I also did not try for obvious reasons, is to gird up your loins and run on their spoor. Ostriches never feed at night, thus, by keeping them on the move while it is light for a day or two, they succumb to hunger and weakness, and are easily caught; that is, if you don't succumb first, which might occur if you don't happen to be a Somali man.

To return to my ostriches. They were three in number, two grey hens and a black and white cock; two continually fed while one did sentry-go. They were feeding across an open bit some 400 yards in extent and towards some bushes. I went down flat, and, wriggling along for a solid half-hour, emerged just opposite where they should have been; but they had vanished completely, and I saw them no more. There were plenty of ostriches about; their fresh spoor was everywhere, but we very seldom saw them. I imagine their height gives them an enormous advantage, as they can look straight over the Somali thorn bushes, which a man can't; while, unlike a giraffe, for example, their height doesn't give them away, as their bulk lies in the body only, and no one could spot their heads and necks very far away.

I ended this interesting day by spotting a grand old oryx bull far out in the open plain; there was not enough cover to hide a terrier, and I was quite at a loss how to approach him. Spots, however, was a man of resource, and gathered a large clump of dry grass, considerably higher than most of it thereabouts. Armed with this we crawled forth. When the oryx grazed, we made best pace on hands and knees; when he looked up, we collapsed and lay still, while Spots held the grass like a fan in front of us. We were crawling, of course, side by side. After a long time we got to 150 yards from our quarry. At this point he stopped feeding, and stared more intently than I liked at the grass tuft, that he evidently did not remember having noticed before. I was, for some reason that I forget, using my 12-bore rifle that day, a terrifically hard-hitting weapon; but the weight of the spherical ball made it drop at ranges over 100 yards. I accordingly, after gently pushing the muzzle through the grass screen, took a very full sight at his shoulder; the bullet "told" loudly, and he staggered to the shot, nevertheless he went off. My pony had had to be left far away, and by the time I had whistled him up, the oryx had disappeared in the bushes surrounding the plain. I galloped after him as soon as I could, but, being unable to see him, had to dismount and puzzle out the tracks with my

hunter. We followed him till dark, but I'm sorry to say did not overtake him; I hate leaving a wounded beast out. Before turning we marked the place, by making a circle with a spear, and then galloping about a mile each way, leaving a spear trail in the sand. Eustace had meanwhile bagged a good oryx bull.

Next morning at 5.30 I was away. There had been a little rain in the night, but, luckily, not enough to obliterate tracks. I was on my pony, and we had not reached the place where we were to pick up the tracks, when I saw the thick horns of a bull oryx over the bushes. I jumped off and, running in, shot him dead as he was starting to go off. I thought it was the wounded one, but there was not a mark on him. It was no use apologizing to him for my mistake, and he was a beautiful bull, anyhow. We then got on the tracks, and about half a mile on discovered our original quarry, very sick in a bush. I finished the poor beast off, and found that last night's shot had gone low, catching him in the fore legs. I rode back to camp with an oryx head on each side of my pony, but with no wish to molest any more.

CHAPTER XI

RHINO, AND HOW NOT TO SHOOT THEM

We were now practically on the confines of the barred Ogaden country, and of course began to hear wonderful tales of the number of rhino on beyond. We had, however, promised to limit ourselves to the eighth degree of latitude, so decided to do one march more to some pools, replenish our water-barrels, and then turn our steps northwards once more. On this march I, for the first time, saw rhino tracks; they were old, but impressed me much with the enormous power of the brutes. This one had apparently strolled *through* large thorn trees as we might walk through a bunch of grass. The cover here got very dense, one mass of "wait-a-bit" thorn trees as far as the eye could reach; in the distance, to the south, we got glimpses of a hilly country. Spots told me that in this country beyond there were large sandy water-courses, and that by watching these you could often see rhino coming down to drink, and get a fair shot. No one, he said, had ever

killed a rhino in the heavy bush. In this manner he tempted me to push on into Ogaden; but I felt very selfish in even coming so far, as Eustace's big 10-bore rifle, which he had brought for rhino had come to a bad end in the encounter with the lion, and he had no weapon to tackle such a beast with, so that although he generously agreed to accompany me, knowing how keen I was on meeting rhino, I did not wish to keeP him long, more especially as we soon found that the heavy bush held no other game, excepting a few gerenûk, which, I suppose, live there, as, like the rhino, they browse in preference to grazing.

We arrived at our pools and found them three in number, each about forty yards in diameter and quite shallow, rather like an Indian snipe "jheel." Tracks of rhino, about a week old, all round, were encouraging; but the look of the dense tangle of thorns all round prevented any great enthusiasm. Eustace at once got a beautiful gerenûk buck. We had now, I regret to say, not had a decent wash for a long time. We could never spare enough water to fill our small indiarubber bath, but the sight of the pools raised our hopes. We accordingly reserved the cleanest-looking one for our private use, and, deciding that such an important event as a really good wash was not to be hurried over, decided to have a "European" morning on the morrow, combined with a bath

apiece. Eustace led off accordingly on June 3, and was still splashing in his tub while I was in bed gloating over the prospect of mine, when Spots' head, wild with excitement, was thrust into the tent with the news that a rhino was within a few miles. Bathing was "off," breakfast was "off," and, cramming a few biscuits into my pocket, I mounted my pony and was off myself. Abdi the son of Adan, our head-man, personally accompanied me, with Spots, my "syce," and a camel-man, who had charge of my water-bottle and a fid of cold oryx that my boy thrust on him for my lunch. I soon found a pony was impossible, and sent him home.

At 8.40 we were on absolutely fresh rhino tracks. I shall never forget that morning. I have seen the Addo bush in South Africa, also many of the thickest West-coast jungles, but for hard work that bit of Somali thorn bush beat them all. We positively had to crawl under the bushes most of the way. Huge thorns seized me by the hat, by the back of the coat, by the putties, and as fast as I was clear of one I was into another. It was like walking through a thickly coppiced wood with a fly-rod, only much more painful. Had it not been for those huge, fresh tracks I should have "chucked" it at once.

Of course the rhino had made a path, otherwise progress would have been impossible; but he had

only broken the larger stems, the others had swung back after him. Owing to our creeping position, any animal standing fairly high on its legs couldn't make us out well, and I several times saw the limbs and bodies of gerenûk quite close.

From 8.40 till midday we spoored like this, then suddenly—I am always using this word, but most things do happen suddenly when after big game—suddenly then, there was a terrific crashing just ahead with snorts for all the world like a train starting, and a mighty beast was away without a man of us seeing him. In another moment we were standing on the ground where he had been lying down, bang in the middle of a thorn bush. We had a short consultation, and decided to leave him for a bit to settle down and then to resume tracking. I was carrying my 12-bore rifle, which had hammers. These I had cocked when I heard the rhino, but owing to the danger of its going off by mistake while forcing my way through the bush, and anticipating no further excitement for a bit, I now let them down. Abdi Adan and the camel-man threw themselves on the ground for a blow; Spots strolled on a bit, examining the spoor; I was on my feet about ten yards behind Spots and twenty yards ahead of the other two. A whistle from Abdi Adan. I looked round and saw him wildly excited and pointing at something beyond me. Now it is always difficult to see the

exact direction a man is pointing when he is behind and pointing at an object beyond you. Besides, his point of view was different, and he was lying down, looking under the bushes, while I was standing; anyway, I could see nothing, so again I looked back for information. Both men had gone! I looked forward to Spots: he had almost disappeared, was busy flattening himself under a bush, and so obviously trying to look as if he wasn't there that I remember for a second I felt amused—only for a second, however, for I at once felt my situation very dangerous. I was the only one of the party on my legs and at all visible. There was evidently a rhino very close, and I hadn't an idea where the danger was coming from.

Here I may remark that I attach no blame whatever to my men. The only beast a Somali really fears is the rhino. Besides this, had they come to me their movement would have precipitated a charge, and they afterwards said they imagined I had seen the animal. To my left was a transparent thorn bush, then about twenty yards fairly clear, then dense thorn again. In a moment—all this took place in an infinitesimally short space of time—a huge rhino came out of the dense bush at a lumbering trot, shaking his head up and down and heading straight for me. My rifle, as I have explained, was not

cocked. Why hadn't I cocked it all this time? Well, all this time was only a few seconds, and I was so used to my hammerless weapons that cocked with a movement of my thumb; also, I suppose, I had been intent on looking for the rhino. I cocked, turned towards him, and brought my rifle up; but there was no time for more, my movement or the click of the hammers had caused him to locate me exactly, and putting his head down, he was on me with a rush—at least not quite on me, for luckily in a flash I knew the impossibility of stopping a rhino with a frontal shot, and I was so close that an instant's delay to get the sights on him, or even to simply press the trigger, and I was caught, so dropping my weapon and using both arms to clear the bushes, I made two or three springs back; I couldn't run properly in the thorns. I expected every instant to be hurled in the air, and I believe he was almost touching me when I took a mighty header, —like jumping through a screen—into a clump of thorns at right angles to my former path. Further movement was impossible; I was pinned, so lay like a mouse, feeling, I remember, a sense of relief that there was no more to be done; either he had seen my "jink," in which case I should soon be a pulp, or he hadn't and I was saved. Needless to say the latter was the case. I waited some time, and then heard a whistle,

which I answered. I couldn't move; but soon Abdi Adan and Spots arrived and extricated me, torn to bits.

It appears the rhino on being first roused had not gone far, but had circled round and come in from a flank, so to speak. Abdi Adan had spotted him waiting for us, and subsequent examination proved that he had been invisible from where I had been standing. He had charged straight over where I had been, stopped just beyond the point where I took my dive into the thorn bush, pawed up the ground, and then walked away. My fleeting view of him had left the impression of a very large horn—perhaps this was only natural; anyhow, my relief that he hadn't got me was soon followed by awful grief that I hadn't got him. Abdi Adan and Spots now said that he was clearly a bad rhino, *i.e.* of an evil disposition, and that we should give him up. I, however, thought that as he had gone such a short way after the first rouse, he might be still hanging about, so decided to "refresh" and renew the pursuit. Unfortunately for the former, the cold oryx and water-bottle man had vanished completely, having bolted in the excitement, and was not again found till we got back to camp that night, where we discovered him posing as the sole survivor of the party.

The spoor now led straight through the thorn

bush, the beast swerving neither to the right nor to the left for any obstacle, but leaving a broad path behind him, from which escape would have been impossible had we again met him face to face. At 2 p.m., being many miles from camp, without food or drink, having had practically none all day, and being obliged to perpetually carry the 12-bore, I decided that it would take us all our time to get back; so we turned, and, disappointed though I was, I fancy none of us were really sorry. The rhino was thoroughly roused, was evidently in no amiable temper, and the odds in this bush were rather on his bagging us than *vice versâ*.

Late in the afternoon, on the edge of the heavy cover, we met Eustace, some men, and a spare pony coming out after the report of the cold-oryx man to fetch home our remains. I was never more glad to get on a horse in my life, and the thirst I had when I got in—well, it would have fetched a big price in some places; as it was, I did good justice to our somewhat uncommon beverage, tea and sugar, only with whisky instead of, or as well as, milk—highly recommended.

CHAPTER XII

END OF SOMALI

We were now so far south that we had an uneasy feeling that we were in the forbidden Ogaden country; also, as I have explained before, there was little game, and it was evidently not a rhino country, as we had seen no fresh tracks with the exception of those made by our savage friend; also, I felt it was hardly right to expose my men to the danger of hunting them in the thorn bush. Not, be it understood, that I wasn't in a funk for my own skin, but my keenness to get one came first. Accordingly, next day, we sent the caravan back a short way out of the bush on to the open plain. I spent the day in the thick cover, but saw no sign of any other rhino. Late in the evening, crossing the plain, I got a beautiful aoul buck through the shoulders at 170 yards, and saw my first "sig," the Somali hartebeest, though it was then too dark to shoot. After another day or two, slowly moving north, during which we had some long but unsuccessful

SWAYNE'S HARTEBEEST.

stalks after ostrich, and Eustace shot a large but mangy hyena, we got a cool day, and marching from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. regained our head-quarter camp. Here we found everything as it should be, and devoted a day to stock-taking, overhauling our stores and attending to our heads and skins. I had buried most of my skulls round ant-hills for the ants to clean, which they had kindly seen to, so I now dug them up, and tied a little label on each, with a number corresponding to one that I also put on each respective head-skin, so that there should be no fitting of skins on to wrong skulls when they were set up. My skins, thanks to the dry climate—that is, when it wasn't actually raining—and also to alum and taxidermine, were in perfect order.

I got my second gerenûk buck here. He was standing by a bush, stretching his head up to browse on the higher branches of a "guda" tree, when I first sighted him. Spots declared he was only an ant-heap, and as I had never before known him wrong, I believed him rather against my better judgment. I accordingly, instead of stalking him properly, merely stooped down a bit, and approached him only half covered. I got to nearly 100 yards, when away went the ant-heap —a beautiful buck with thick horns! No time for a shot. Directly after I heard his alarm note to my right, and, looking under the bushes,

saw him standing watching me at 140 yards. This time I got a shot, and hearing the bullet tell, ran up, and found him a few yards on, just breathing his last. My bullet had laid his side open, spoiling the skin for me; but Spots said it was good for boots, and took it off. A few of our men got seedy about this time; they said it was a way they had after the rains, and tied bits of string round themselves as a cure; we, however, gave them large doses of cascara tabloids, with results that exceeded their anticipations, and they soon were recovered.

We then moved east, a bit towards the Dolbahanta country, passing numerous karias; there was not much game. The Dolbahantas were then confirmed looters, and we heard a story of a "sahib" who, on returning to camp one night, had met some horsemen driving camels; he thought little of it till he met some of his own men, and discovered that they were *his own* beasts. He galloped back and fired a shot, whereupon the looters bolted, and the camels were recovered. They probably had not realized to whom the loot belonged, and had not reckoned on fire-arms.

We were never molested, but Eustace one day came on some Midgan hunters, very thin and stark naked. They said they had been out after game with two camels, two ostriches, two donkeys, and some dogs. They had had good sport, and

were returning with their spoils when, one day, two of them, a man and a boy, had followed and slain an oryx. They laid down their bows and arrows, and proceeded to skin him when, out of the bush galloped about twenty looting Dolbahantas, secured their bows before they could get to them, and then forced them to show where their camp lay. Having located the latter, the looters tied up the man and boy securely, left their ponies, and, stealing in, lay round the remaining Midgans till dark. It must have been all managed very cleverly, for at a given signal they rushed in, making straight for the Midgan weapons, of which they got possession without any hitch in the proceedings, and took the lot prisoners. They then returned to the Dolbahanta country, with their captives walking by their ponies, and having got far enough to render pursuit impossible, they let the Midgans free, confiscating everything, animals, hunting spoils, etc., the sole worldly goods of the unfortunate hunters.

I shot a dibatag in this country, an oryx bull, and spent a night sitting up for a reported leopard, but there wasn't much sitting up about it, as I dropped off to sleep about half an hour after starting my would-be vigil, and slept the sleep of the just till 6 a.m. next day. I never was any good at sitting up for anything; it is most monotonous work, and very little sport to be got

out of it. The oryx I shot as we were short of meat; he was the finest bull I got at all. The amount of stopping these big beasts take is extraordinary. I certainly killed one or two stone dead with one shot, but it was very hard to do. This one I shot through the lungs, and again in the fore leg as he galloped off; but even then I had to ride him nearly a mile, and give him another bullet, to settle him.

We now worked round towards our old tracks, intending to revisit the Toyo plains *en route* to Berbera. We hoped the young grass might have tempted the "sig" into the open country; so far, bar the three I saw one night when it was too late to shoot, we had seen none at all. One afternoon, then, saw us pitching camp on the south-eastern edge of the rolling plains, and that evening I saw a hartebeest; there were two of them, large, black-looking antelope. We were not fairly out on the plain, and there were scattered bushes about; I was thus able to do a careful stalk. But on approaching I had to take my eyes off the sig for a bit, and they suddenly vanished, nothing to be seen but an aoul doe where they had been. After waiting a bit, I showed myself, the aoul doe trotting off, and all at once being joined by the two sig, going like the wind; where they had come from I don't know. Anyway, off went all three for a mile

or so, when they stood again, and again I tried a stalk; this time I got within 400 yards, when the wretched aoul gave the alarm once more. Off they went, heading for the open plain, and I watched them till they were little specks in a cloud of sand on the horizon; here they again stopped, so I did a long walk, got on my hands and knees in the grass, and again drew near.

As I was thinking I had got them all right at last, a Somali came over the plain and put them away for the third time; they now galloped straight back to where I had first sighted them, and for another hour I stalked again. At last, in the growing dusk, I got a shot at the biggest, range only 120 yards. The bullet told with a "phut," but both went away; the wounded one stood again at 250 yards, and I hit him again with my second barrel, making him kick viciously as he was struck. I then ran after him, racing against the darkness, which I feared would cause me to lose him. Rounding a bush I nearly ran into number two, but was so out of breath that I missed him with both barrels. Number one I soon found stone dead. My first bullet had passed through the centre of his shoulder, and my second through his hind leg.

I have already mentioned the strictness of the Somali with regard to the "hallal" or throat-cutting by a Mohammedan, and this was a good

example. My first bullet had penetrated the heart; nevertheless, the beast had galloped furiously for a short distance before dying; we had only lost sight of him for a few seconds, so he was barely dead. Spots dashed up, one glance at the beast, and instead of drawing his knife he picked some grass and thrust it into the glazing eye; not a move of the eyelid betrayed the least flicker of life. Spots and I were alone. I shouted to him to "hallal" quick; but no, he would rather endure the chaff of his comrades, who would be naturally annoyed at a fat buck dying without their getting any meat, than "hallal" an instant late, and pretend the beast had died by a Mohammedan hand.

Next morning we started our hunters before dawn, galloping after them a little later, and before 7 a.m. we were well out on the plain. At first no game was visible, and I began to think the Toyo was as lifeless as it had been before the rains. Presently, however, two hartebeests crossed our front. I dismounted to follow them, and they led me into a mass of buck such as I have never seen before or since. It was a lovely morning, with a cold wind, bright sky, and brilliant sunshine; not too strong, though, to necessitate any more head-gear than a cap. The plain was the light green of young grass, and as far as the eye could reach were masses of fawn-coloured aoul

SKINNING A HARTEBEEST.

[*To face p.* 164.

interspersed with groups of hartebeest, sometimes forty to fifty in a group, but more often ten or twelve. The sig, with their sleek, dark chestnut coats, looked like troops of well-groomed horses. Cover there was none, but I found I was only regarded with curiosity as long as I kept slowly on the move, didn't approach closer than 400 or 500 yards, and didn't look much in their direction. Thus I strolled round one or two herds, looking for a good bull out of the corner of my eye. At last I spotted one, fat as butter, with a glossy coat, nearly black, and fine horns. I walked round, getting always closer and closer, till I was within 150 yards, had my back to the sun, and could see every hair of his coat; then I sat down quickly, and, before the alarm could spread, had a bullet through his shoulder, bringing him all of a heap. His horns were 18½ inches long, with the peculiar twist that is the fashion among sig; their circumference was 9 inches, and tip to tip they spanned 21 inches. In the afternoon I got another very old bull, whose horns were even better in many respects than the first. Eustace had also been busy, so that we were now revelling in abundance of fresh meat in camp, both us and our men; meat, too, of the fattest and most palatable description. Spots used to be hugely pleased when I got a hartebeest, jumping round and shouting, "Look him fat, look him fat!"

We spent several days among the herds; I only shot with the rifle very occasionally, but spent hours watching them and shooting with a camera. I believe I got some most interesting pictures with the latter, but having several days to wait for a ship at Aden on my return, I became impatient to see the results, and gave them to a local photographer to develop. They were only films, and the great heat, a somewhat common complaint at Aden, caused them to turn out failures with the exception of a very few. The herds used to graze across the open in an extended line, and I often rode round till a mile or two ahead of the line, sent away my pony, and lay in grass till they were actually all round me. I, of course, never took such a mean advantage as to shoot any by this means excepting once, when two fine sig bulls began fighting vigorously within a few yards of me, when I dropped the biggest to stop him bullying.

One afternoon I got up to an enormous herd; of two bulls I couldn't make up my mind which I wanted, so I waited till they were fairly close together and then shot one, hitting him hard as I thought, so I gave the second barrel to number two, dropping him dead. Number one had now rejoined the herd, when a third bull dashed at him and bowled him over; he got up again, but by this time was so surrounded by does that I

couldn't fire for fear of hitting one, so I whistled up my "syce" and sent him galloping on to separate the wounded bull from the rest. Unfortunately my proper syce was *hors de combat* that day, having been a candidate for cascara tabloids overnight, and the camel-man who replaced him was a fool. First, he started after the wrong group of sig, and, being recalled, came galloping madly back past the dead sig, his pony shied, and he flew over its head on to Mother Earth. I then got on the pony myself, and singling out the bull, started to ride him; he, however, warmed up sounder every stride, and I couldn't gain an inch. The ground was full of ant-bear holes, and I nearly came down once or twice, so I couldn't go as fast as I wished. I once or twice jumped off for a shot, but he always gained so during the operation that it was useless to fire. I daren't fire from the saddle; the ground was too bad for a cocked rifle at a gallop. Eventually I headed him round towards camp, and we caused great excitement by passing within a quarter of a mile; here my real syce joined in on another pony, and about a dozen camel-men with spears, but though we rode and ran till dark, we never got any closer to our quarry, so marked where we left off and went home.

Next morning I rode off at daybreak, passing crowds more sig, which I didn't interfere with.

Close to where we had stopped the hunt overnight I saw a big, black-looking sig lolloping away; making sure it was the same one, and not wishing for another long hunt, I dismounted and did the longest shot of the trip, bringing him head over heels dead, with a bullet in the neck at just over 300 yards. I'm not prepared to say I could repeat that shot. It was, however, a fresh bull, and I never found the other, so let us hope he had only got a slight flesh wound.

I shot no more sig, though that afternoon I got into a herd, or rather let them graze to me, of great numbers; at one time I counted up to over 250 sig, all within by no means excessive rifle range, with, I suppose, four score or more no further than 100 yards from where I lay. The cows and young ones were in the centre, with a fringe of bulls on the outskirts, alternately grazing and fighting, the latter being rather a tame affair, and consisting of a few butts to try each other's weight, after which the rule of the ring was for the lighter of the two to turn tail and bolt for his life.

Near the northern edge of the Toyo we got among karias again, and for a day or two saw no game. When nearing the Goli mountains I had rather an interesting day; it was by a place called Oonoonof, and the country was open and stony. There were a good many Spekes gazelle

about, but they were wild as hawks, and as I hadn't got one, I got rather wild myself at not being able to approach a buck, and let off some rather impossible long shots without doing any damage. Having in this way wasted some half a dozen cartridges, I next discovered that my hunter had not brought any "reserve ammunition," *i.e.* other than that I had in my pocket, so I was reduced to four cartridges.

I now began to see quantities of game. A herd of wild asses trotted across a shaly slope above me; I had not shot one, so sat down till they were crossing my immediate front, when I whistled, bringing them to a dead stop. I then shot one. Not an event I am particular proud of, as they are hardly warrantable game, and I felt many pangs of compunction as I looked at the magnificent ass on the ground. However, I thought *one* was allowable; it is not now, I believe, but he was by no means wasted, as his beautiful marbled legs and delicate hoofs form the legs of an oryx shield table, while Spots took off his skin and sold it at a karia we passed soon after for the sum of fourteen annas, two sheep skins and a drink of milk. This took a lot of arranging, and it being rather late, we headed for where we expected to find camp; it was always rather problematical, as we were marching every day now. I had three cartridges

left, and very soon came on a large sounder of wart-hog. Now, I had only got one of these, and was very keen on another, so followed them up, and presently got a right and left at two boars; one succumbed at once, hit in the throat, but the biggest went off, so, leaving the dead one for the present, I started after the other again. I was now reduced to my last cartridge, so, though I had the boar in sight for about a mile, I continued to run after him, being very fearful of a miss. At last I got a chance that would have rejoiced the heart of a baby in arms, but from over-anxiety I suppose I missed clean. I continued to chase the boar for a long way, hoping to get at him with my hunting-knife, but never got on terms. Finally I had to leave him, and as the smaller boar was now some miles back, while it was growing dark and we anticipated some difficulty in finding camp, I had to resign myself to the loss of both of them, and luckily soon after struck the caravan tracks and got in tired and unhappy.

Arrived in the Goli mountains, we separated, I taking Abdi Adan, the head-man, and our one remaining donkey to tie up for lions, while Eustace, as a set-off, had the fat cook. I pitched my tent under some spreading trees in a river-bed in the heart of the mountains. For nearly a fortnight we hunted here; I had no

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KOODOO BULL.

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particular luck, but Eustace got the finest trophy of the trip, a koodoo bull, whose gigantic horns measured 36 inches straight, 52 inches on the outside curve, 10¼ inches in circumference, and 22 inches tip to tip. I had many long days, climbing from daylight till dusk, but the hardest of them all was an unsuccessful one. I was out soon after 5 a.m. and picked up fresh spoor of a koodoo bull at 7. I had three picked men with me; these I deployed in line along the side of the hill. At about 9.30 the man above me whistled, and I ran up; he had seen a koodoo walking on in front of him through the light bush; I following, running for half an hour, when there was a crash barely twenty yards ahead. I saw a pair of horns, and—he was gone. I spoored for another half-hour, then a whistle from below, and, running down, *this* man had seen several cows and a splendid bull file past him within sixty yards; there were their tracks right enough. I went on after them, and got into a country of open, stony ridges. All at once I saw the herd just walking over the next ridge some 500 yards away. I now pulled off my coat, rolled up my sleeves, and, stuffing a few cartridges in my breeches pockets, ran as hard as I could for the ridge. Arrived there, I peeped over, and there was the annoying beast just topping the next ridge beyond and still out of range. I continued

running almost without intermission till 2.30 p.m., seeing the koodoo again and again, but always out of range. I had lost my hat long before, but had left it for Spots to pick up, though it was a broiling hot sun. Finally, I lost the spoor in some stony ground, which fact, I think, saved my life, though, strangely enough, I remember feeling that I could go on for ever, till I turned to go home, when I felt the effects, particularly as I had broken my boots badly. I got back to camp about 5 p.m., and at 5.30 went out with a gun and shot some guinea fowl and lesser bustard, finishing the day by tying up a goat for a hyena, and sitting over him till half-past ten, when I fell asleep, and being awakened by Spots, went to bed, leaving him with the rifle. The hyena came, and Spots, sitting just inside the zeriba fence, missed him at a yard or so.

I got two good Speke buck up here. One I saw just before dark one evening. There was little cover, and an attempt to stalk him on my hands and knees proved abortive, he never letting me get within 500 yards. At last, knowing that in another quarter of an hour I should be unable to see my sights, I got up and walked unconcernedly parallel to him. He didn't seem to connect me with the thing he had seen creeping after him behind bushes, but, after going off once, took but little notice of me, though he kept

SPEKE'S GAZELLE.
(Note peculiar protuberance on the nose.)

[*To face p.* 172.

glancing back to where he had last seen me on all fours. I couldn't afford to let him go off again, it would have been dark, so seizing the opportunity when he was looking back, I sat down, took a quick aim and fired. Somewhat to my surprise he rolled over stone dead. This was the luckiest shot I ever did, as the distance was 235 yards, and a Speke is a small mark. Ten minutes later it was so dark I couldn't see my sights. While after him I put up a striped hyena, the only one I saw in Somali.

My other Speke I got more easily. I saw a herd through the bushes coming my way. I sat down in the open without being seen, and remained motionless with my rifle up. They came on and passed between two bushes 120 yards in front of me. The first was a doe, and she paused and favoured me with a long stare. As I didn't move, however, she passed on, and her place was immediately filled by another doe, who in turn had a good look at me, and so on till seven does and young bucks had passed, when out stepped the buck I was looking for. He treated me to a shorter inspection, but as he turned away I dropped him.

After we had joined up camps again we had some sports for the men. The programme included three-legged races, mounted combats, and a tug-of-war, and ended with a "fell" race over

the hills. This latter was won easily by the oldest camel-man of the lot; but as it turned out that he had never been seen at the starting-post, but had chopped in halfway, he could not be awarded the prize.

There were lots of scavenging beasts in these hills, and it was a weird sound to hear the hyenas at night; their laugh runs up and then down rather to my mind like a ship's syren whistle, and ends in a deep chuckling. It used to echo in an extraordinary way in the gorges, and was decidedly unpleasant to hear in the dead of night.

We used to let our hunters sit up in turn over a goat tied just outside the zeriba at night. I preferred putting a bit of meat out, but that only "drew" foxes. Spots never killed a thing. One night a fox came to a piece of meat placed against the thorn fence. Spots had a shot-gun loaded with No. 1 shot pushed through a hole over the meat, and the fox must have been almost brushing against it, nevertheless he managed to miss, and then complained that a gun wouldn't kill a fox! so I went out myself, and succeeded in breaking both fore legs and nearly blowing the head off the next arrival. The Somali fox, I may mention, is a leggy, ugly beast, more like a jackal.

While crossing the Jerato pass we heard of a man-eating leopard. He had killed a man a week before, and mauled another since then, the

latter having been rescued by his pals. We accordingly halted to have a go at him. The first day Eustace's hunter saw him following them; but on Eustace turning round he bolted, not giving a chance of a shot. That night we sat up in turns the whole night through over a fat little goat; but it was very cold, with a tearing wind, and not even a hyena came. The next day we both had a long day on the hills, and as a result of that—the violent wind and our vigil of the previous night—felt we couldn't keep our eyes open, so deputed Eustace's hunter, who had not been out, to sit over the goat. Neither of the hunters had succeeded in killing anything by night; by day, of course they weren't given the chance. About midnight—bang! And rushing out we found the poor little goat dead, and a huge hyena breathing his last on the top of him. To bed again, imagining the hunter had turned in too; but at 2 a.m.—bang! And we were out in the cold wind again in our pyjamas. By the light of hastily lit torches there we saw the dead goat, above that the dead hyena, and across that the body of a fine male leopard. I hope it was the man-eater. As it was just where he hunted, and there did not seem to be many about, I believe it was.

We now left the breezy uplands, and crossing the Golis were soon sweltering in terrible heat. A

violent hot wind blew always from midnight about to midday. We thought it would keep us cooler, but found it raised dreadful sand-storms and impeded marching; we nevertheless made the pace pretty well, and passing Leferug, Hamas, Dera Godli, and Chefto, soon reached Berbera. We shot at nothing but a few dik-dik, our one aim being to get out of this unpleasant bit of country, where, what with the heat by day and the mosquitoes by night, we were rapidly falling away from the fine condition we had been in when we left the mountains. We galloped into Berbera early one morning to find a boat was leaving for Aden at 2 p.m. We tried to arrange for the selling of our camels at once, and an old Arab offered us Rs. 28 apiece for the lot; but while we were debating whether we should take this or not, he heard we were in a hurry and dropped to Rs. 25; and when we were biting at this, he said that, after all, he thought Rs. 20 was ample, so we washed our hands of him. I ran down and arranged with the skipper of the boat, the *Lightning*, to defer his departure till 6 p.m., and then we sold the camels by public auction at nearly 40 Rs. apiece. We sold ponies, donkeys, goats and all by the same means, paid up our men, and sailed punctually at 6 p.m.

We had a most unpleasant crossing, our little steamer pitching and rolling terribly. She was

DIK-DIK.

crammed with sheep and cattle, numbers of which died during the night, and altogether it was a very miserable sixteen hours. But the Aden hotel at the other end seemed most luxurious, and we revelled in whiskies and sodas *with ice*.

A kind Parsee merchant undertook to get our live lions home for us for Rs. 400 (about a "pony"), but the skipper of a tramp steamer was very pleased to do it for Rs. 30, and I may here mention did it very well, too, landing them strong and well in the London docks.

Eventually we returned home on the P. & O. *Oriental*.

It might be interesting to append here a few notes on the trip I find in my diary.

As to rifles, one's weapons soon get out of date; but I can imagine none more useful than my ·500 Express, with explosive bullets for buck, etc., though, as once in a hundred times the light bullet may "sell you a pup," I preferred to take no risks, and used my 12-bore with soft lead spherical bullets for dangerous game. This, driven by $5\frac{1}{2}$ drams of powder, was perfect, always getting the bullet well home and, in a body shot, *leaving it there*, and not wasting its energy and shock by whistling away over the country beyond. I have no wish to enter into the well-worn controversy as to the merits of sporting rifles, but simply to state my limited experiences, which go to prove, to me,

that a very small-bore weapon — Mannlicher, Lee-Metford, and such like, may be very excellent in its effects on a large thick-hided beast, but wastes its energy *beyond* any other, nor can any "faking" of the bullet make sure of preventing this. Of course I speak generally, not of particular cases, as no one knows better than I the surprising effect a well-"faked" Mauser bullet may have if it hits full on the bone of even one of the lesser, thin-skinned animals. But this, I maintain, is the exception.

We should have had more filters, as the water was always dirty, and we had only one large "Berkfelt," and two rather useless pocket ones, so we had to boil our water and drink tea.

We had too many cartridges, a fault on the right side; but my two hundred No. 4 for the shot-gun were unnecessary. I didn't fire thirty, as one is very chary about letting off a shot-gun in a game country, and the only things to use it on were bustard and dik-dik, both of which afford better sport with a rook-rifle. Our bag included lion, oryx, koodoo (*strepsiceros*), koodoo (*imberbis*), aoul, Spekes gazelle, wart-hog, gerenûk, leopard, dik-dik, hyena, dibatag, wild ass, hartebeest, and Somali foxes.

CHAPTER XIII

NORTHERN NIGERIA

In the year 1890 the Royal Niger Company concluded a treaty with the King of Borgu, a state lying on the right bank of the Niger, and forming the northern hinterland of our colony of Lagos.

In the year 1894 a French mission started from Dahomey to absorb Borgu, but were again forestalled, Captain Lugard, as he then was, acting on behalf of the Company, reaching Nikki, the capital, and making treaties there and at other principal towns, such as Kiama, just before the mission arrived. This must have been an exciting race, which the Englishman won with only five days in hand. The French now withdrew, but in 1896 they were back, and this time actually overran Borgu, and, after some fighting, established posts all over the country and on the Niger itself. The Company were unable to cope with this. Accordingly, at the end of the year 1897, the Colonial Office took up the running, and called

for volunteers to go out to these distant hinterlands and raise a black force whereby we might demonstrate more effectively than by the making of treaties to whom Northern Nigeria and Borgu really did belong.

All this gave promise of some very interesting work, and, as it was an untouched part of the best game country in the world, of some very interesting play in the intervals. There was nothing much doing in the way of wars at the time, and applications were numerous, which resulted in the Colonial Office being able to pick their men carefully, and a better lot in every way I shall never meet again. Some were killed or died of fevers in Nigeria, and a most surprising number of the original Waffs (West African Frontier Force) fell afterwards in South Africa, so that of those I went out with in 1898 comparatively few are left. I applied and was selected, mainly, I suppose, on account of my previous wanderings, which were a guarantee of good health and a certain amount of "bush" experience.

For a full account of the origin and subsequent performances of the Waffs down to the relief of Kumasi, in which they took such a leading part, there is no more fascinating book than "From Kabul to Kumasi," by Brigadier-General Sir James Willcocks, K.C.M.G., D.S.O. I intend only

ON BOARD A STERN-WHEELER.

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picking out the more interesting sporting adventures from my diary, though some other matter must be introduced by way of explanation.

On February 17, 1898, I sailed from Liverpool on the ss. *Boma*. On the 24th we reached Teneriffe, and, after a day on that flowery but dull island, steamed to Sierra Leone, which we reached and quitted on March 2, and finally on the 8th were at Forcados and anchored in one of the Niger creeks.

Forcados does not smile at the traveller with open arms; in fact, there is only one adjective that quite hits it off, and that is "God-forsaken." It was, I remember, a wet day; it always is, I believe, at Forcados. The sky was lowering, the sea grey; it was hot, with a stuffy, damp heat. Everywhere were mangrove swamps, no dry land visible, only trees coming up out of the sea; creeks ran in all directions. It was easy to see how it took so many centuries to discover the mouth of the Niger. Presently a flat-bottomed stern-wheeler emerged from the swamps; it was a Niger Company boat; it steamed up to us. One or two white, very white, men were on board, and our ship's officers began to question them as to other white men they had taken out on previous voyages. It appeared they were mostly dead, or "couldn't last long." I think we were all a little depressed as we got down on to the launch. We

steamed away up to Burutu; here there were a few acres of, more or less, reclaimed swamp and a Company's store, but it was all very depressing. There had been a hitch about our food. We thought arrangements had been made to feed us as far as Lokoja, but they hadn't, so we got some goats and lived on them for the next week. Some people can see beauty in a mangrove swamp, but I can't; I think it's the most horrible thing I know. The stillness and total absence of life, except for countless voracious mosquitoes, are bad enough; but the worst is, you feel that the air is laden with the most poisonous microbes, the deadly miasma hangs round you at night—in short, it is a fitting abode for loathsome reptiles, not men.

On the third day we got into the main stream of the Niger. Banks appeared, and here and there a village; swamps, thank goodness, left behind. Hippo were now abundant; we counted between forty and fifty one morning; they lay submerged except for the tops of their heads. One would be watching, to all appearance, some rocks or patches of weed when—they were gone, to appear again a few moments later. Of course it was no use shooting at them from the launch; but well-worn hippo paths, leading up through the masses of tropical vegetation on the banks, showed where they might be shot when coming

out to feed in the evenings. Some of the natives kill them from canoes with large harpoon spears. It is, I believe, a very dangerous and exciting game, but I never had the opportunity of joining in or even seeing a hunt.

Crocodiles were innumerable, and no scruples deterred us from potting at them whenever seen, though our large stern-wheeler made such a noise that one could only get very long shots, and I don't think we did much damage to the brutes. Once later on, on a higher part of the river, we did better shooting. The water was low and sand-banks were sticking up everywhere. Each sand-bank had several huge brutes on it, and in one morning we killed five so dead that they were unable to get into the water, besides hitting many more very hard indeed. This was also steaming up stream. But the softest thing I ever had was coming down once in a canoe. My canoe-man kept his paddle under water at the stern, using it entirely as a rudder—I lay in the bows—and, absolutely noiselessly, we drifted close past one crocodile after another, while I put bullets straight into their open jaws. A "croc" generally lies with his jaws wide open, and a shot down his throat is instantaneously fatal. I never troubled to skin them; it is a big job, and not worth the bother. One of our officers shot a "croc" once through the head on a

island sand-bank. He landed from his canoe, and the beast not being such a monster as many, they managed to drag it into the canoe, and were paddling off when it suddenly revived. He never knew quite what happened, but remembered he was about to call his men's attention to the fact that the "croc's" tail was still moving a little, when everything went to blazes, and he found himself in the water struggling to reach the island again. This he and his men succeeded in doing safely, and, luckily, their canoe, bottom upwards and with a side stove in, drifted on to a promontory of their sand-bank a little further down. The crocodile meanwhile continued to lash the water and perform extraordinary evolutions by the scene of the disaster, and eventually sank in shallow water, where they could see him. They had, however, lost interest in him, and it was all they could do to patch up their craft sufficiently to reach the bank of the river. Kit, everything was lost, and after a night on the bank they had to force their way through the bush till they struck a village and procured another canoe.

The number of natives taken by these fearful river pests annually is very great. I personally heard of many cases, but the details are too horrible to discuss. All the more credit then to the late Ronnie Buxton of the Norfolk

Regiment, who was called upon one dark, rainy night to do a forced march with his company in a case of need. They found their way barred by a tributary of the Niger, which he *swam* in the dark, and finding canoes on the further bank brought them over, and soon had the men across. He was one of the last, if not *the* last, to fall in South Africa, and had, I believe, ridden over to a party of Boers to tell them peace was signed when he was shot.

On the 5th day we had hills on each side of us, and the country was really beautiful and full of interest. The hills took on a purple hue in the evening, and the broad river wound so amongst them, that sometimes you could quite imagine you were steaming up a Highland loch. The temperature, too, was surprisingly agreeable—quite cool, except just in the middle of the day.

On the 6th day, at 4 p.m., we reached Lokoja, the headquarters of the Royal Niger Company, and where the Waffs were already in process of formation.

Lokoja, at the confluence of the Niger and Benoui rivers, is situated at the foot of hills some 2000 feet high, and has extensive views. A long chain of hills form the northern or right bank of the Benoui, and everywhere the country is hilly, and looks more open than it really is.

The nucleus of the Waffs were some way from

the town, and the work in hand was proceeding apace under the direction of Major Pilcher, Fifth Fusiliers, who I now met for the first time, though a couple of years later I was to have the honour of assisting him in many a long and busy day in another part of our African empire.

Natives, including Haussas, Yorubas, and Nupes, were coming in wild bushmen, and being turned into smart soldiers at a great pace, but not without almost incredible labour and difficulties.

The Colonial Office always " did for " us in the most generous and business like manner, to which some of us were scarcely accustomed. However, at the first start, hitches were bound to occur, one great difficulty, of course, was getting things up the river. Thus, though we were confident that tents and stores had been sent out for us as promised, no one knew where they were; or, anyhow, we hadn't got them, which came to the same thing as far as we were concerned. Our predecessors, who had arrived earlier, were little better off, and too busy to help us much, so we had to make the best of things.

It was not pleasant to be plumped down on the banks of the Niger in the tornado season without shelter. Had it been the Thames, one might have found a pub; as it was, we got into the remains of two deserted native mud huts; one was far superior

to the other, possessing part of a thatched roof. We divided into two lots of four. I think we were eight altogether, and tossed for the "palace." I was one of the losers, but we were consoled by the fact that their portion of roof fell in on them in a storm the first night. Both this night and the succeeding one, we were treated to terrific tornadoes and drenching rain. Except for the violence of the wind being slightly abated, we might as well have been in the open.

The first night I arranged all my worldly goods and myself under a large mackintosh sheet I had brought, a relic of former hunting-trips. The sheet blew off in the tornado, and while I was pursing it in the dark, as it flapped away like a wounded bird—it blew clean out of the hut—the torrential rain came down and nearly drowned me. I remember gasping for breath, as one does after a first plunge in very cold water. The wind in a Nigerian tornado is of terrific strength. The second night I left my goods to get wet, and, by rolling myself round and round in the mackintosh sheet, remained fairly dry, though nearly stifled; positively, though, at this time I hailed with delight the approach of a tornado, giving as it did a slight respite from the incessant torments of mosquitoes and sand-flies.

We had not much to cook, but what cooking there was, was done under great difficulties. I

had brought a boy from Sierra Leone who proved quite useful, and assisted materially. Of course, local servants there were none; they'd have served up raw entrails with their hands. All this time we were busy all day teaching buck niggers the art of war; and very keen pupils they were, too. The only thing they couldn't understand was why, after a week's training, we didn't take them off and smash somebody.

The second week in April, after over three weeks' work, I got two days' leave, and, riding out some eight miles, camped. I had borrowed a tent from some lucky man, and pitched it eventually by the side of the river Mimmi, a tributary of the Niger. I had done the thing in style, and had mosquito curtains even; but, notwithstanding this, I spent a fearful night. I was too close to the water, I suppose; nothing would keep out the mosquitoes and sand-flies. I dozed off once or twice for a bit, but got no proper sleep all night, and was thankful when it grew light enough to give up the farce of trying, and to start into the bush with my rifle.

I soon found it was very different hunting to any I had ever done; the bush was so dense that it was seldom one could see any distance, while a pony had to be discarded as it made too much noise.

Although not nearly so hot as many countries

I had shot in, it was a peculiarly trying, muggy heat, and before the sun was well up I had to mop my forehead perpetually, or the perspiration blinded me. After about two hours I saw a herd of hartebeest across the creek—which was all the Mimmi was here. They were some 250 yards off, in thickest bush, so that I could only get glimpses of them here and there. I tried to get closer to pick my head, as I had been brought up to do, but put them up, and they vanished. Soon after I came on a hartebeest quite close, with his head in a bush. Again I paused; I couldn't see his head, and there were others about. Again I lost my chance. Once put up anything in this bush, and they are gone from sight in the smallest fraction of a second. There is plenty of game in Nigeria, but the difficulties of getting it are so enormous that I then and there decided to take my chances as they came, and waive all former rules. I saw several little light-coloured buck that day, but never succeeded in letting off my rifle.

That night I camped rather further from the stream, and there were more sand-flies than mosquitoes, whereas on the previous night there had been more mosquitoes than sand-flies. But while on the first night I considered mosquitoes were the worst, by the end of the second I had discovered my error.

A morning was all I had left me now, and I had got nothing. I was off before sunrise, and soon struck fresh "bush cow" tracks. Bush cow are the West African buffalo, and have seldom been shot. While following these at best pace I saw a wart-hog for a second, and then a hartebeest. Finally, after about three hours, I came on the Mimmi creek further up, and having now lost all signs of my buffalo, and being very beat and rather dispirited, I had a rest. It seemed a hopeless job, crashing through the bush, and it would puzzle any one to get through without crashing; one drives everything away in front, and what with my want of success and sleepless nights, I began to wonder if Northern Nigeria would, after all, be much of an acquisition to the British Empire. Finally, at eleven o'clock I started for camp to pack up and get back to headquarters. Just at midday I was walking parallel to the creek and about fifty yards from it, wishing myself in Somali, or the Himalayas, when I heard some heavy animals galloping down the creek; the latter here made a bend away from me for a bit, and then a sharp bend back, bringing it directly in front of me some way ahead. This was the direction the animals were taking, so that by running straight ahead I hoped to cut them off, of course trusting to luck that they kept to the creek. I ran like a lamp-lighter, but was

too late. I heard a clatter below me, and they were past out of sight; another second, and I had jumped down the six-foot bank into two feet of water. The noise I made running up saved the situation. They tried to bolt up the opposite bank; it was very steep, but there was one possible place for which they had to go in single file. As I arrived in the water I heard one crashing away on top of the far bank; another I saw for a flash collect himself on the top and vanish; the third had his fore legs on top, and with a scramble was up as I fired both barrels without taking any aim, to speak of. I felt certain I had missed, but ran on to climb out by their path and pursue. I was almost under where they had been when number three appeared for a second staggering on the brink of the bank, which gave way with him, and he fell with a crash almost at my feet, at the last gasp. It had all happened so quickly that I didn't know till then what I had fired at. Imagine, then, my joy to find a great roan antelope bull was my victim. A glorious sight he was, with long gnarled horns and his shaggy coat, truly worthy to rank with the koodoo, oryx, sable and eland as the greatest trophy in Africa. By oryx I mean oryx beisa, or gemsbôk, as, strictly speaking, the roan is an oryx himself. Thus was one of the chief objects of the expedition to Nigeria achieved in my first shoot. I

refer, of course, to my own objects. I believe the Colonial office had others!

I had hit him with both barrels, breaking a fore leg and getting him through the quarters. I took his head and skin off, and, returning to camp, sent my six carriers to get the meat for themselves. Five came back before long, laden, and said the sixth had cut off so much that he was lagging a bit. They said they had heard a leopard, attracted probably by the smell of blood.

Now, here is a strange thing, that sixth carrier was never heard of again. The kill was scarcely a mile and a half, I suppose, from camp, and when he didn't come in I rode back and hunted everywhere, firing shots at last, but not a trace of him or his tracks could we find. I was so long hunting for him that I rode back to Lokoja in the dark at last. He was a recently enlisted soldier, and perhaps, wanting to desert, thought that when he had some good chunks of meat to help him on his way home was a chance. Against that, however, one must set the fact that he had a wife at headquarters; perhaps, though, he had another somewhere else, and wanted a little change. I think the others were in with his plans a bit, and the leopard story was to put me off the scent; but of course, if he was lagging with freshly killed meat —"quien sabe"! Anyway, my men had to carry extra loads, and my "Sar Leone" boy Samuel

had to put the roan head on his, and a big weight it was, too. However, he was immensely pleased with himself, marching into headquarters with it in advance of the party.

"A roan bull head with a grin underneath," as some one aptly described it. Samuel was mostly grin! He had a huge cavernous mouth; when he opened it, it appeared as though his head was coming in two; it turned up at the corners, thus giving him a perpetual fixed grin. He was naturally of a cheerful temperament, but I have seen him once when he had pains in his little Mary, weeping from the upper portion of his head while he beamed from the lower.

I remember on the Borgu expedition there had been several cases of looting, or some villany among boys, and our chief decided to make an example of one who had been caught red-handed. All the boys were paraded to see him flogged, and the C.O. commenced with an impressive speech to them. In the middle he checked himself, and exclaimed, "Look at that boy grinning; he'd better have a dozen too." Every one looked, and, sure enough, it was the faithful Samuel beaming from ear to ear. I had to explain hastily that it was the formation of his face, and that I would answer for it he was looking as solemn as lay in his power.

A day or two after this shoot, I was ordered

suddenly up river again. Skins take a long time drying in the damp heat of Nigeria, and, despite my efforts with wood-ashes, etc., my roan skin was not nearly prepared, so, as it was no good taking it with me, I had to leave it. I buried the skull in an ant-heap for the ants to clean; but when I returned to Lokoja long after, our temporary headquarters had been moved, thick bush covered the old spot, and I never found my skull again, so the horns, which I had taken off, were all that remained of my trophy.

Before starting up river, I was given a tent and, luxury after luxury, a camp bed, a very welcome exchange for the tornado-soaked ground.

For five more days we steamed up the Niger in a stern-wheeler till we arrived at a large island called Jebba. Here we had orders to camp. The island was very swampy, but some rocky hills looked the most inviting, so we endeavoured to pitch our tents there. The pegs wouldn't go into the rocky soil, so we had to secure the ropes as we could to boulders. We managed with hard work to get them up as the sun set, and within half an hour down swooped a tornado, and not only blew them flat, but distributed our belongings over many hundred yards. Exactly what we ate, or how we ate it, for the next few days I quite forget, but I remember I was always ravenously hungry, and we were glad when the arrival of

ON THE MARCH IN BORGU.

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some Niger Company officers and black troops enabled us to make a start again up river for the Borgu expedition, under the command of Major Willcocks, as he then was.

We cut across country for a couple of days; we were above the range of stern-wheelers now, and struck the river again at Bajibo. Our route now left the river, but before we could start we had to collect a certain number of carriers, and though Bajibo was a large native town, and good pay was offered, it took some time to collect men; they would keep sending women, whom we wouldn't take. Finally, the king had to be seized and lodged in the guard-room, where he was fed on bread, or its equivalent, and water, till enough men arrived. It was always difficult to get carriers up country, particularly if they thought there was any chance of a fight. But as it was impossible to move without them, and as they were well paid, so that it was only laziness or cowardice deterred them, one felt no scruples in using a little high-handedness in collecting them, especially as they were contented enough when once started.

Bajibo was unfortunately situated in that every one going to Borgu, which became quite a fashionable resort a little later, left the river and required carriers there. They wouldn't come by themselves, and if you went to look for them, they

hid in the bush; so the only way was to seize His Majesty, who, one way and another, spent much time in the guard-room on a frugal diet. Doubtless he felt that it was all for the best, and that temporary discomforts were as nothing compared to the advantages of the advance of civilization! But "uneasy lies the head that wears the crown."

Some eighteen months after, during which time I had been home and come out again, I again found myself approaching Bajibo, and sent on to the subaltern coming there for carriers to be collected. He was new to the country, and greeted me with "Awful sorry, but I've only just got Major A—— off; he wanted carriers, and I couldn't get them till yesterday. I was advised to put the king in the guard-room, and feed him on bread and water. I had him there a week, and only let him out yesterday. But I'll soon catch him again, if you like." His highness had grown quite thin, so, to his intense relief, I deposed him, and the prime minister, a gigantic negro, ruled in his place.

While waiting at Bajibo, two of us went out after game. I always managed to hang on to my ·500 Express, however much campaigning kit was cut down. We did nothing, but managed to lose ourselves in the dense bush. At 5 p.m. we were on some rocky hills, whence we could

see Bajibo within a few miles to the south-west, and the great river running fairly straight from the foot of our hill to the town. We went down into the bush and rode, as we thought, parallel to the river for two hours, when just as we expected to find the town we came to some hills; we climbed up them, and thought we must have overshot the mark. It was now nearly dark, so we fired some signal shots, lit a big fire, and at 9 p.m. were composing ourselves for the night when we heard a shot from *the south-west*, and, to make a long story short, we had made a complete circle in the bush, and struck the same hill that we had been on at five o'clock. After stumbling about in a bush again for some time in the dark, we met a picquet that was out looking for us, and got in about midnight.

As this story rather reflects on us, I may mention, for the benefit of those who don't know what an African bush can be, that my companion was a very experienced "bushman," as also were two Haussas who accompanied us.

Two days after this we were off for the interior of Borgu. Here we had a very difficult and unpleasant task, the chief difficulty being that we were continually running up against French posts, often composed entirely of Senegalese Tirailleurs. These fine soldiers naturally thought

we had no business there, and our Haussas returned the feeling most heartily; in fact, the situation, difficult enough for white officers, was quite beyond the black troops; and I think we, on both sides, deserve some credit for the fact that we managed to keep our men so well in hand that, though for some two months we were doing all we knew for our respective countries, and our men were crossing and recrossing each other's tracks, sometimes meeting face to face and spoiling for a fight meanwhile, yet never a rifle went off, and when news from Europe came that Borgu had been definitely allotted to us, we parted in a friendly manner.

I had one whole day's shooting about this time, and that was all. I went out with the late Captain Abadie, with whom I had many shoots in Nigeria. Abadie had been a friend of mine since the time when he sailed for India in 1893 to join the Sixteenth Lancers on the old *Serapis* that was taking my regiment to the East. He was very quick at seeing game, and an extraordinary shot, so he generally "wiped my eye" when we went out together. No man did more for Northern Nigeria than he did; he was the friend and adviser of white and black men alike, and well deserved the C.M.G. that was conferred on him in 1903. He died suddenly, soon after, in the country he had served so well.

THE HOME OF THE GREAT ROAN ANTELOPE.

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On this day's shooting I saw a fine roan bull, but was too late, he dashed off into the bush as I raised my rifle. I also missed two duikers. I never did shoot well in Nigeria, it was such quick work in the heavy bush.

Abadie saw three *herds* of roan, and shot one grand, full-grown beast, but carrying a poor head. The country round here—we were near Kiama—was one maze of tracks, elephant, lion, hartebeest, roan and water-buck being the most noticeable, though there were many more that I didn't know; but everything was blotted out by the continuous bush. Towards the end of June, Abadie and I got another two days to ourselves in the bush. As far as I was concerned this was, unfortunately, only a repetition of my former experience, though I missed one good opportunity. I was making my way through the usual tangle of coppice when I came on a roan; I saw for a moment a great head and neck, with long curving horns, and a bristling mane, within twenty yards. Then, crash! He was gone for ever. Abadie killed an old roan bull with only one horn, gnarled and blunted with age, but yet 21½ inches in length, and 9½ inches round the base. He also bagged a cobus kob and a water-buck.

A day or two later, one of the officers of our expedition, while on the march with troops, shot a roan cow with a 25½-inch head, a male and a

female hartebeest, an oribi, and a little buck like a Somali dik-dik. All these in three days, though how he managed it I never could conceive.

At the end of the month the French evacuated this part of Borgu, including the large walled town of Kiama, which latter we proceeded to occupy, the late Captain Welch—who afterwards fell leading mounted infantry in a gallant and successful attack on a Boer convoy—and I being left in charge.

Just before the main body of the expedition started their march back to the river, I, seeing plenty of hard work ahead, determined to prepare myself for it by a short hunt. Matters being adjusted for the present with both our white neighbours and with the Baribas, as the inhabitants of Borgu call themselves, naturally made it easier and more pleasant to go off into the bush. The King of Kiama lent me his private hunter, a long, gaunt-looking negro, rather like a wolf, and taking also, as a slight precaution, three of our black soldiers, we all made our way to a pool half a day's march away; here we "bedded down" for the night, and I remember thinking what a strange party we were. A few months earlier Nigeria and its tribes had been but a vague name to me; I think two, perhaps at the most three, living Englishmen had entered the Borgu country, and this was only during

Lugard's flying visit. The Baribas had a well-earned name for war-like propensities and for treachery, though, be it said, my experience never bore out the latter. Yet here was I sleeping peacefully in the stillness of the bush with, as my companions, three Haussas and a Bariba, nor would I have changed my resting-place for the most luxurious bedroom in England.

I was starting next morning with the Bariba, and meant to take a soldier to carry my second rifle, but the Bariba would have none of him. So thinking that two would certainly make less noise than three, I decided that, "in for a penny, in for a pound," I would trust myself entirely to the hunter. It is a case of trusting, as no white man, in fact, none but the local negroes, can find their way many *yards* in this bush, and if my guide had chosen to lead me wrong or desert me in the bush, I should have been there now. However, no such danger occurred; on the contrary, we soon came on fresh roan tracks, followed them, and put up a roan cow. I hardly saw her, but ran up, and must have got into the middle of a herd; they were snorting all round me, and I saw glimpses of several. One looked round a bush at me some sixty yards off, and seeing a bit of his body, I fired standing; he went off, but it seemed to me, slowly, so I ran after him and, getting another view, gave him the second barrel,

when he came down in a heap. He was a most glorious buck, and the Bariba shared my huge delight at such a prize, though I wished he wouldn't eat portions of his still quivering entrails raw, while he helped me flay him. I sent my Pagan friend back eventually to fetch the other men to get what meat they wanted, and as heavy rain came on, I returned to camp with them, and spent the rest of the day skinning the head.

The following day I sent my "army" back to headquarters by the shortest way, and made a long *détour* with my Bariba, crossing a fresh lion spoor which he refused to follow, and killing a good oribi. We always found it most difficult to induce these natives to follow a lion; they have a wholesome dread of the "king of beasts," and whether it is that they are unaccustomed to the power of the rifle, or that they fear the consequences to themselves should the white man be mauled, I cannot say. Anyhow, they always tried to dissuade one from spooring them, and would purposely lose the tracks. Spooring oneself and keeping a look-out for the lion in a heavy bush meanwhile was practically impossible.

The day after my return from this short shoot, the main body of the Borgu expedition started on its return journey to the river, while Welch and I occupied the fort at Kiama. Welch was greatly elated a few days after at hearing that a

herd of roan had been viewed within a day's ride, close to a small village. A hunter came in with the report, and it was arranged that he (Welch) should ride out on a certain day and be met by the hunter on the track close to the village. The hunter met him all right, but carrying the head of a freshly killed roan, which he had bagged with a poisoned arrow to save the white man trouble! Of course it was cut off in such a manner as to be useless as a trophy, even had Welch cared to keep it; but the Bariba was quite pleased with himself, and had evidently done his best, as he thought; so Welch saw the comic side of the affair, and let him off with a caution.

This was always a trouble in Borgu; the natives have regular professional hunters, and do not look upon it as a very swell profession. No "big" man will ever bother to hunt, and they were a long time before they could believe we really wanted to toil about in the bush for the fun of the thing, when we could always get meat in the market. At first, indeed, they suspected there was some deep purpose behind it, and actually put impediments in our way, but eventually we somewhat changed the fashion, and before I left Kiama I took the king himself out with me once. He rode, I remember, an ambling steed, and had a string of nearly nude wives running in single file behind him, carrying large

brass pots on their heads, which contained his impedimenta for the trip.

With the exception of guinea-fowl and a few duiker, there was little game near so big a town as Kiama, and unfortunately about this time we could only leave the fort for flying trips strictly on business. There was still much unrest among the Baribas, and our small garrison were a greater source of anxiety than the natives outside. Here, in a few words, I must explain this. When the Borgu expedition started, few of our newly raised recruits were far enough advanced to take part in it. The consequence was we had to use the Niger Company's men. These men had been used to garrisoning towns on the banks of the river where they lived comfortably with their wives, etc., and only went inland for short expeditions. Suddenly new white men, unknown before to them and unconnected, as they knew, with the Company, arrived on the scene and took them off for a long and arduous campaign. This they stood very well, more especially as some Niger Company officers were with us; but afterwards, instead of returning to the river with their own officers and comrades, some of them were told off to stay at Kiama with two of the stranger officers, far from their homes and their wives. To add to the difficulties, we had some of our newly raised Waffs with us, who were well

supplied with clothes, while the Company's men were in rags. This caused much jealousy. Again, money was unknown in Borgu, and the men had to be paid in cloth. Transport was a fearful difficulty, with the result that they could only be given advances. It was impossible to get up enough to pay them in full. We could give them no definite promises as to when they could return to the Niger, when their wives could be sent up, or when the Company would provide them with something to wear; and discontent grew till it only required a little "Dutch courage" to turn it into something more serious.

This was duly supplied in the shape of trade gin, which, I regret to say, was at this time brought up by native traders, as the pioneer of the white man's civilization, in this part of Africa. Some came into Kiama, as we afterwards ascertained, one morning, and that afternoon the Baribas could have wiped us out, as those of our men who hadn't the luck to be too drunk were mostly openly mutinous. Our newly raised Waffs stood by us well; but it was a big trial for them, and there were very few of them, while, after all, the others were their countrymen, so that one hardly liked to think what would happen if the worst came to the worst. To make a long and very unpleasant

story short, we took the bull by the horns, shot one man dead, and tied eleven more up hand and foot till next day, when I took them by forced marches back to headquarters on the Niger. It was a miserable march, soaking with rain, and for once—though I was ready for snap-shooting at any moment—I had no eyes for game. It took five days' marching to the river and getting down to Jebba by canoes.

Jebba during my absence had been transformed from a barren island to the busy headquarters of the 2nd Batt. of the Waffs, and it was a treat to me to live for a few days in the lap of luxury, as the mess they had started seemed to me after my Borgu experiences.

I crossed twice on to the western (right) bank of the river, and on one occasion saw a grand water-buck, which I pursued till dark, eventually getting bogged in some high rushes on the river-bank, and starting a crocodile in dangerously close proximity to me, though I couldn't see him for the reeds.

At the end of July I returned to Kiama, where Welch had meanwhile received a reinforcement of forty of our Waffs, and took over the command, Welch returning to headquarters.

I now looked forward to a bit of peace and some shooting; but it was not to be. Disturbances among the Baribas at the beginning

of September, and the illness of my white non-commissioned officer later in the month, kept me busy. I only had this one white man with me at first, though later on I was able to get up a corporal of the Army Medical Corps. Incessant rain, too, had undermined the high mud walls of my fort, and at all hours of the day or night they would fall with terrific crashes. It kept us busy, filling the gaps with stout stockading, which I infinitely preferred. At the beginning of October matters again became strained with our white neighbours. It was the time of the Fashoda crisis, and as Kiama was close to the frontier, and within fifty miles of the strongly held French post of Nikki, this entailed a great lot of extra work and vigilance. Simultaneously with this my N.C.O. developed that fearful scourge of West Africa, black-water fever, and for days lay helpless, hovering between life and death. I am thankful to say he eventually pulled through, and was got back to England safely.

Among other things at this time I ordered the King of Kiama to clear a broad belt of bush round the fort to get an open field of fire. I was awakened one morning before daybreak by a most unearthly clamour just outside the walls, shrieks and yells accompanied by the blowing of horns and the beating of war-drums. Living, as I then was, in a state of perpetual readiness, I was out

in a moment with sword and six-shooter, and saw at a glance every man dashing, rifle in hand, to his allotted post; only the sentries were gazing unconcernedly over the wall, and shouting back laughingly to their comrades. The matter was soon explained; it was the king arrived to clear the bush. A Bariba is no great hand at work, and he had brought 150 of them, who were excited to a point of frenzy by the din and potations of native beer, a harmless though exhilarating liquor, in which state they attacked the bush like demons, and continued to do so all day, to the accompaniment of yells and war-drums. This, I afterwards discovered, was the king's little way whenever he wanted a particularly big job carried through. Of course, the sentries had seen the whole thing, so were "in the know"; but I was gratified to find with what alertness my "recruities" behaved.

I was able to give the French a warm reception after all, though, thank goodness, of a different kind to what I had intended, for, as soon as the crisis was somewhat abated, a French officer with a guard of Senegalese Tirailleur came as my guest to Kiama. His object was to disinter two French officers who had been killed by the Baribas and buried near Kiama, and re-inter them in French soil. Despite his sad errand, we had a very cheery time together, sat up most of the

night telling yarns, and shot my guinea-fowl coverts by day, while my Yorubas and his Senegalese fraternized over two "fatted calves" I gave them. He was a delightful companion to have in the bush, and a most sporting and adventurous fellow to boot. We parted with regret—on my side, anyhow—and many promises to meet again in London or Paris. When I last heard from him, he wrote from Paris, that he was just sailing for the river Amazon to interview a cannibal chief, and that he would let me hear all about it, "if he escaped the pot!" I have not heard from him again, but have every confidence in his being more than a match for his "chef cannibal."

Shortly after this I was locally promoted, and ordered down to take charge of a company at Lokoja, on the river. I was sorry to part with my men, and they couldn't understand why they couldn't come with me. My black sergeant came to me with a deputation, who appeared to think I was sick of them, and assured me that any other soldiers I took over would, to put a long speech shortly, not be a patch on *them*.

Just before leaving, a lot more troops came into Kiama, and we had one day another slight attack of intoxication among the newly arrived soldiers. As I had forbidden, and imagined I had stopped, the importation of trade gin to

the town, I was, of course, furious; but this time we were able to trace the traders who had brought it. We seized the two traders, together with their boxes of the deadly over-proof stuff, likewise the prime minister who had been warned to look out for it, and putting them in "durance vile," summoned a "durbar" of all neighbouring chiefs, when, before the assembled multitude, we broke the boxes, smashed the bottles, and, tying the traders to a whipping-post, gave them a lesson in selling spirits without a licence. The prime minister, under a guard, watched proceedings, anxiously expecting his turn to come next; but being a useful and intelligent man, we did not wish to lower his dignity, so dismissed him with a caution. I forgot to mention that he had already lowered his own dignity somewhat by being "blind to the world" when arrested.

One rather amusing incident of my stay at Kiama I forgot to mention. About 10 p.m. on a dark night there suddenly arose a terrific yelling and beating of war-drums in the town; it gradually approached the fort, and my men were convinced it meant war. So thinking that they ought to know, I quickly decided to take a dozen men and make a dash for the king's "palace"; it was closer to me than the rest of the town, and it seemed to me that if by any chance I could secure the royal person before the row started,

ENTRANCE TO KING'S PALACE AT KIAMA.

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and carry him off to the fort, it would be a very decisive move. Should an attacking force get between me and the fort during my absence, my white N.C.O. and garrison could hold them off, while by falling suddenly on them in the dark from the rear we should "give them fits." We ran at top speed to the royal abode and into the king's private huts, and I at once saw the alarm was needless; his majesty, in a costume that might have been pyjamas had he been a European, was taking his rest surrounded by wives; they got up in all directions like a large covey of partridges. It turned out that a wedding-procession was in progress in the town, and on my apologizing to the king for breaking in so suddenly, he slipped on some robes and led me to a position in the town whence we could observe the festivities without being seen ourselves, while I sent my men back to the fort with a note for my N.C.O. Certainly, the ceremonies not only sounded but looked more like a preparation for a fight than a wedding.

I returned to the river *viâ* a place called Boussa, and on the way had a nasty experience. We camped one night after a hot day by a beautiful shallow and rocky pool; the water was very clear, and I could see the bottom everywhere excepting under some overhanging rocks. Leaving my men cooking their food, I strolled

down to the pool and began stripping for a bathe. I had actually waded in nearly waist deep when one of my Bariba guides, coming down for water, saw me, and set up a great shouting; I couldn't understand him, but, wishing to be on the safe side, I came out. Next morning at daybreak I rode off at the head of my party, and was passing the pool when there was a splash, and I just saw a huge crocodile dive in from the overhanging rocks. It did not need the "Ah, ahs" of my men and their glances at me to tell me what a fearful fate I had escaped, and while I felt a cold shiver run down my back, I vowed to be tempted by no more rocky and innocent-looking pools.

Another adventure on this march that might have proved more exciting than it did, happened at a place midway between Kiama and Boussa. Wawa, I think, was its name, and the friendly King of Kiama had warned me that the inhabitants thereof were "bad men." It was somewhat extraordinary in Borgu that, dotted about, were villages of what Indians would call "budmarsh" men, that is, sort of Ishmaelites, whose hand was against every one, and who looted and slave-raided till a chief, such as Kiama, would lead a punitive expedition against them, when they fled to the bush and reappeared elsewhere.

My escort consisted of ten men only, and I

had a good many unarmed carriers. However, as I wished to test the truth of reports, and didn't think they would dare to attack a white man, particularly after some lessons they had had in the vicinity, I camped in a clearing in the middle of the town. The inhabitants at once began behaving suspiciously, not a woman or child was to be seen, and the men wouldn't come near us, but peeped at us round walls and from behind trees, while several I could see with my glasses were carrying arms.

I made my interpreter, of whom more anon, shout to the Wawaites to send their head-men to interview me, and assured them we didn't wish to harm them; but the only ones to come forth were two men dressed in bright-coloured patch-work tobes, and covered from head to foot with charms, snake-skins, etc. They came up and began walking in ever-narrowing circles round us, refusing to speak, and muttering continuously. I had recognized them at once as ju-ju or fetish men, as also had my men, who showed great signs of uneasiness. They, for their part, showed no signs of fear, believing themselves, as they do, to be invulnerable; so, to clinch matters, we made a dash at one, who immediately showed his hand by whipping out a long dagger, and there being nothing uncanny about this, my men joined in with a will, and in a moment we had

secured them both. One had a sword and dagger under his tobe, the other a sword and bow and arrows; the arrows and dagger had been lately poisoned, so it was fortunate we didn't give them time to use them.

As the villagers were now brandishing weapons and shouting, half my men kept an eye on them with loaded carbines and fixed bayonets, while the other half stripped the "witch doctors" of all their weapons and charms. We then held them up in turn by the arms and legs, and soundly flogged the devils out of them with my hippo-hide whip, and then let them rush naked and yelling away.

This total upset of the ju-ju pleased my men hugely, and, as my interpreter put it, they said "White man's ju-ju pass black man's ju-ju too much." The villagers troubled us no more, though, as a precaution, I thought I would try a bit of ju-ju on my side before night, so, taking care they should see what I was doing, I scratched a big circle round our little encampment of about a hundred yards' radius with my sword point, and had a message shouted to them, that any man crossing it would immediately and surely die.

I believe Wa-wa had eventually to be done away with.

Now a word as to my interpreters. They were

INTERVIEWING A CHIEF THROUGH INTERPRETER.

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one of our greatest troubles at first; but at the beginning of the Borgu campaign I got hold of a small escaped slave-boy, about fourteen years old. He had been traded and bartered right across Africa, and could talk Haussa, Nupe, Bariba, Yoruba, and other languages too numerous to mention. I had with me a Sierra Leone boy who could talk nothing but pigeon English; this the kid, whose name was Bakari, picked up so quickly that by the end of three or four months, incredible as it may seem, I could, through him, converse with any one in Northern Nigeria. The coast boys' pigeon English, by the way, is quite a language of its own, full of weird expressions, *e.g.* "I lib (live) for" means "I am about to," as "I lib for die," "I am about to die;" or again, "Lef um" for "Leave me alone," which is what they shout when you beat them. Prepositions are unaccountably omitted, as "I look him," for "I look for him," or it, as the case may be. Your boy will assure you, if he has been sent to find anything, "I look him for table; I look him for chair; I no fit see him," the latter meaning "I am unable to see him."

The first time I took Bakari into the civilization of Jebba, he was waiting behind my chair at dinner, when suddenly he lent down confidentially, and said, "Sar, sar." I was talking, and paid no attention. "Sar! sar!" again with agitation. "Well, what's wrong?" A pause in

conversation. "I lib be sick too much, sir"—too is used for very.

On my way down river I stayed a day at Jebba island. There was a large garrison there now, but through sickness and stress of work not much shooting had been attempted; in fact, it was the very general opinion that there was little or nothing to be got in the vicinity. I, however, remembered my water-buck that I had viewed on the right bank during my last visit, and at about 2.30 p.m. crossed over in a canoe to pay my respects to him. I was accompanied by Lieutenant Porter, now Brevet-Major Porter, D.S.O., Nineteenth Hussars. We climbed a big steep bit of hill and came to a fairly level stretch which led up to the base of the higher slopes beyond. Here we paused a bit to look back at the view, one of the finest in Nigeria, not, be it mentioned, a country of fine views. Below us was Jebba island; slightly further up stream a peculiar rock, known to the natives as the Ju-ju rock, reared itself perpendicularly out of the river; all round, as far as the eye could reach, lay a slightly undulating bush-covered country alternating with stony ridges, many of them of the well-known African table-topped shape. What beauty there was in the scene, however, centred principally on the mighty river itself, running darkly in places under steep banks, foaming round the Ju-ju rock,

GUN PRACTICE ON JEBBA ISLAND.

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and then opening out and glittering under the afternoon sun round countless small woody islands and bare sand-banks.

We decided to move on together to the foot of the rise before us, when Porter was to keep straight on inland, while I worked round to my right, along the slope, keeping more or less parallel to the river. This was the direction in which I had previously seen my buck. Scarcely had we parted when I heard a rustling in some bushes to my right front, and I had barely time to sit down when out walked a shaggy water-buck doe within fifty yards of me. She paused an instant, looked proudly around, and slowly moved on across our front, full in the open, without a blade of grass between us. A pause, then out came another, and yet another, and finally a glorious buck; but the latter, being some yards on the far side of the does, was mostly screened from me by bushes; I could see bits of his rough coat and a pair of grand horns. They were all quite unconscious of our presence, and not wishing to risk a shot through the bushes, I marked an open spot he must pass, and breathlessly bided my time. Nor had I long to wait, another moment and out he stepped, gave one look around, two shots rang out simultaneously, and he dropped stone dead.

"·500 Express at the base of the neck," I

sang out, as I ran up to him, and "·303 in the shoulder," was Porter's response. Sure enough they were both there, either shot must have been almost instantaneously fatal. We decided that the question of the ownership of the trophy was far too serious to be settled off-hand, so both enjoyed the satisfaction of gazing at his great head, and picturing it set up in all its glory in (different) halls at home. We had a most fearful job to decapitate him. I had for the first and only time left my hunting-knife at home, and the whole job had to be done with a small pen-knife. Heat and flies made matters much worse. I never knew so many flies collect anywhere before, and it was over an hour before we had done the job, both streaming with perspiration and gore, but with the great head cut off at the extreme base of the neck. Most fortunately, during the operation we saw and attracted the attention of a native, far below us, or we should have had to carry the weighty trophy down to the river ourselves, and as the only feasible way to do this was to place it on one's own head, which for obvious reasons was unpleasant, we were glad of his aid. A bargain was quickly struck. The grinning negro pointed to the head and to Jebba island, then to the body and his own "little Mary," and the thing was fixed up.

The measurements of this buck's horns are worthy of record. Length, 26 inches; tip to tip, 14 inches; and girth at base, 8⅛ inches.

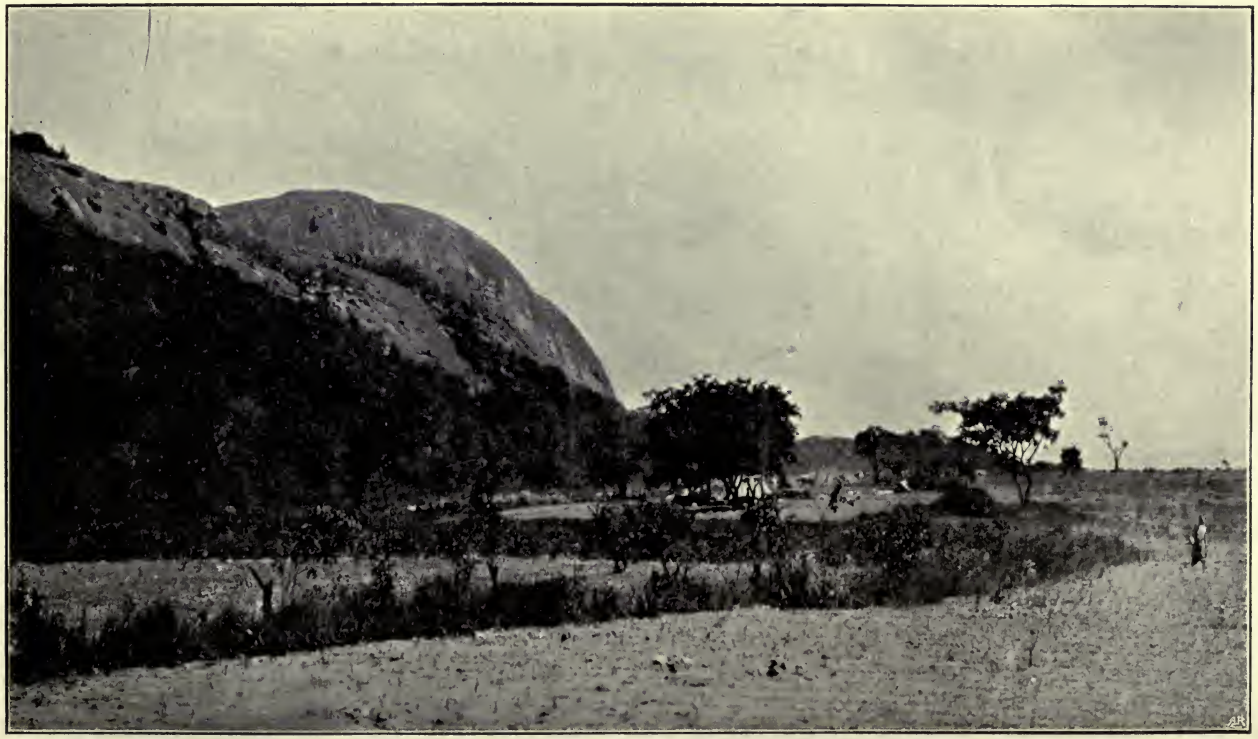
That night, there being several of us on Jebba island, we played a game of poker. Whether I won or lost made no impression on me. One thing I well remember, that in the small hours of the next morning I cut Porter through the pack for the "joker," and the head with it. I lost.

On taking over a company of Yorubas at Lokoja, I formed the acquaintance of a very sporting full private named Ajala, who accompanied me on every other shooting expedition I had in Northern Nigeria. He was the keenest man I ever met on the hunting of "beefs," as big game are ingloriously termed in pigeon English. Being a well-conducted person and of considerable influence among the other men, I raised him once to the position of Lance-Corporal. This, however, interfered with his duties as my hunter, and I fear he never tried to shine in his military career, and was very thankful to be reduced again to a humbler rank.

The first two months of 1899 I was busy soldiering, and hardly got any sport. One flying shoot I had, chiefly noticeable for two unpleasant experiences. Firstly, I rode out ahead of every one, fixing the top of a hill for my impedimenta to

make for. Arriving there alone I off-saddled, tied up my pony, and lay down for forty winks under a tree. I was just dozing off when I heard a rustling, and looking round saw a large black snake sitting up within a few feet of my head. I moved. The other incident was that at night I heard a most peculiar scratching noise all about the inside of my tent. It takes a lot to keep me awake, and this didn't. But next day, while I was out hunting, my boys found that my bed was directly over a nest of very large scorpions, and killed eighteen of them. I shot on this occasion a very good bush-buck, the best of these heads that I ever got; also a huge baboon, that my carriers roasted whole. I was glad that my soldiers would have nothing to do with it, for anything more like a human being being cooked I never wish to see.

Once about this time a white N.C.O. attached to my company essayed to kill a buck. He was with two companions, but lost them and himself. Next day I took out the company to look for him, but we couldn't follow his spoor. The following day every available soldier in the place came out, with no result. The third day every available soldier and as many natives as we could collect in the town were equally unsuccessful. The fourth day my company were worn out, but I called for volunteers, and every man who could walk rolled



CULTIVATION NEAR LOKOJA.

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up like white men. We hunted again from daylight till about 4 p.m., when we reluctantly decided that nothing more could be done. We had a bugler out who had bugled at intervals all day. As we were sorrowfully marching home an officer who was with me suddenly said—he never knew why—"Let the bugler sound again here." He did so, and—"Bang!" a shot close by in the bush. It was the N.C.O. lying in the last stage of exhaustion by a pool. Note the combination of extraordinary circumstances. It was his *last* cartridge out of about twenty which he had fired to attract attention; had he not had it, he was so weak that he would have heard the bugle and yet been unable to attract our attention. There was no natural reason why we should have called upon the bugler, whose lips were so raw with blowing he could hardly sound, to blow at that point. Finally, we had meant to "draw" another bit of bush coming home, and it was only because we were all worn out that at the last moment we had taken a shorter route, which led us to him. We had previously searched the ground where we found him, but he had then been wandering miles away.

In a fortnight's time he had recovered sufficiently to resume his duties in Nigeria, but became orderly-room clerk, as he had no wish for further bush experience.

At the end of February my time in Nigeria had expired, and I was at liberty, provided "exigencies of service" allowed, to return home with six months' leave in my pocket. I was not, however, satisfied with my "bag," and finding Captain Abadie of a like mind, we decided to try what we could do when freed from military duties and responsibilities of all sorts. We decided to go up the river to the Bariba country again, both as having some knowledge of it and it being a reasonably safe part to hunt in. I sent a messenger on to my old friend, his Royal Highness of Kiama, bearing a present in the shape of a musical-box, which I afterwards heard was a vast success, and asking for the loan of hunters and ponies. We then set off from Jebba in canoes, taking a small escort of four soldiers. We reached Bajibo in three days, camping on the way up on sand-banks, and shooting some few geese, duck, and guinea-fowl. Our Bariba hunters had not yet arrived here to meet us, but the natives—of the Nupe tribe in this part—told us of a herd of buffalo on a large island some three miles below the town. They seemed mortally afraid of these beasts, and having imparted their information, each man said his neighbour was much more competent to take us to their vicinity than he himself. They said many men were killed by them. At last, by offering a large reward of

cloth, we induced a man to volunteer to canoe us down next morning.

At 5 a.m. we were up, but no Nupe appeared, so, going into the town, we roused the head-man, and got him to show us our valiant guide's house. He was not at home. His heart had failed him, and he had fled to the bush. At the critical moment, however, some Yoruba hunters turned up. They had a canoe, and had actually been on the island a day or two before, and said they had wounded, but not secured, a buffalo. We at last got off with them, and paddling quickly down stream soon reached the island. We found it shaped like the figure 8; probably two islands when the river was higher, but now connected by a bit of swamp covered with high reeds some fifteen yards across. The larger island was about half a mile long by four hundred to five hundred yards at its widest point. At its far end the river was shallow between it and the mainland, and tracks showed the buffalo had used this as a ford. Both islands were covered with very high, dry grass. We paddled round and found buffalo spoor everywhere quite fresh, on the larger island; no tracks on the smaller one.

Our plan of campaign was as follows: One of us to watch the ford on to the mainland; one, the swamp connecting the islands; and the

Yorubas to light the dry grass all round the edges, by which means we knew that both islands would soon be a furnace of flames and everything living must break cover.

We tossed for the ford to the mainland, and Abadie won. I accordingly was dropped in the swamp, and the canoe paddled of to put Abadie in his place. I had not long to wait before a noise like incessant musketry fire told me that the islands were well ablaze, and I began to realize that my position was hardly an enviable one. I was up to the knees in swamp, so that I could only move very slowly; I had even to keep pulling first one leg and then the other out to prevent myself sinking deeper. The flames might easily reach me where I stood. I felt sure there were crocodiles all around in the reeds—no pleasant feeling when you are standing in water; and, finally, my whole object in being there was to get a charge of maddened buffaloes on the top of me.

Swiftly the flames licked up both islands, and, no breeze springing up, I was only moderately warmed. One large water-buck doe dashed into the swamp from the small island, evidently meaning to cross to the larger one, but seeing that a mass of flame, she boldly took to the river and was soon out of sight, unmolested. Then I heard a shot from Abadie, and finally,

the larger island being reduced to smoking ashes, I waded on to it and walked down. About halfway along I smelt a very strong odour of burnt flesh, and soon made out a large black mass; it was a buffalo burnt to ashes. The horns were heavy and apparently intact, but on my touching them they crumbled away in my hand. This proved to be the only buffalo sighted, and we could only suppose that it was the one the Yoruba hunters claimed to have wounded, and that it had been unable to escape the flames. The rest must have left the island just before our arrival, or else perhaps have taken straight to the water and swum for it. Abadie's shot had been at a magnificent water-buck, that dashed almost into his arms at the ford and fell dead at his very feet.

Next day we moved off inland from Bajibo, and a day or two after met hunters and ponies from Kiama, and began hunting in earnest. The thick scrub of jungle was a nuisance, but the country was as open as it ever could be, as the high grass was down and much of it destroyed by the bush fires, which, I believe, are generally due to natural causes; nevertheless, the view was always extremely limited, and riding impossible except at a walk. We had the King of Kiama's own hunter and his son; they were both as keen as mustard, and absolutely like cats

in the bush. They were used to creeping about in the bush, naked, except for a loin-cloth, their feet even bare, with their bows and quivers of poisoned arrows, and getting right up to their quarry. There is a large toucan that inhabits these wastes with a huge head and curved beak—these birds make a considerable rustling in the bush—and the Bariba hunter has a wooden imitation of the head and neck, which he straps across his forehead; then, bending in the grass, he wags his head up and down to imitate the motions of a bird feeding. The buck, hearing a rustle, looks up, and lo! it's only a toucan, till suddenly he feels the arrow loosed from a powerful bow at a range inside of the length of a cricket pitch.

Neither of our hunters knew anything much about a rifle, and they always thought we were mad to try shots at fifty or more yards; but I'm glad to say they "learnt a bit" before they left us. My soldier-hunter, Ajala, used to come out with me at first, but the Bariba looks upon the Yoruba as a clown in the bush, and to Ajala's great chagrin he had to be temporarily dropped.

On March 5 Abadie opened proceedings with a grand cobus kob carrying a 16-inch head.

That afternoon I saw three fine water-buck; they were quite 150 yards away, and nearly

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MY BARIBA HUNTERS.

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hidden in the trees. They had heard us, and were slowly moving off. My Bariba now performed a most astounding feat. Doubling himself up he ran, without a sound, clean round them; then, showing himself, caused them to gallop back past me. Unluckily, my trigger of the right barrel had worked a bit loose, becoming a sort of hair-trigger, and I let my first shot off before I meant, losing thereby an easy chance. I was the more sorry as my Bariba had never seen me kill a beast. He rubbed it in by pointing to his bow and nodding then to my rifle and shaking his head.

Thank goodness I was able to retrieve the situation soon after. Going through the bush, we spotted hartebeest and lay down. They had not heard or seen us, and I made one out standing broadside on at 120 yards. It was an easy shot, and I so far staked my reputation that I pointed to his bow and shook my head, then to my rifle and nodded, and finally took a careful aim and plugged the beast through the heart, so that he fell to rise no more. The Bariba threw no more aspersions on my rifle, and I saw him describing the whole thing to his son over the camp-fire that night.

We soon after moved to a very pretty little camp on the river Moshi. No elephants were about now, but during the rainy season they had

been here in numbers. I saw the tracks of fourteen coming down abreast to drink at one waterhole close to camp. These Nigerian elephants seem, according to all information I could gain, to move in a regular orbit: they come through Borgu to the Yoruba country, cross the Niger south of Lokoja, then up by the Benoui to Lake Chad, through the Northern Haussa territories and down to Borgu again. There were none in Borgu at this time.

For three or four days we had delightful hunting from this camp—kob, water-buck, hartebeest, duiker, oribi, wart-hog, and last, but not least, roan being added to the bag. Much of the meat we smoked and sent by messengers to our friend the King of Kiama. None of our men were up to skinning a head in such a manner as to be fit for setting up as a trophy, so we had to waste a good many precious hours of daylight doing the job ourselves.

À propos of this, I remember rather a comic incident. My Yoruba soldier, Ajala, was "under instruction" as a skinner, and one afternoon I left him in camp with rather an indifferent duiker head to see what he could make of it by himself. I returned to camp at dusk, after a hard day, and presently my interpreter boy came and said, "Ajala say him head too much bad." Remembering the duiker, and being tired and

unwilling to bestir myself again at once, I chucked him a pot of taxidermine, and told him to tell Ajala to rub it well into the hair and round the eye-holes, ears, and lips. I had shot the duiker early the preceding day, so I imagined it quite possibly was "a bit off." About an hour after I strolled round to the men's camp-fire, and beheld Mr. Ajala streaked all over the face and head with white taxidermine. It was his own head to which he had been alluding!

There was so much game about here, and Nature had provided them with so much cover, that we shot pretty much what we could. It was impossible in this heavy bush to wait to examine heads very carefully. You hardly ever saw a whole beast—just a momentary chance at a part of him. Also, no European rifle had troubled them before, and few were ever likely to trouble them again; and we wanted all the meat we could get. Not an ounce of it was wasted; all was smoked and distributed among our followers, to be eaten at leisure or smoked and sold afterwards. And it was a good thing to give—as I make bold to think we did—a favourable impression of hunting with white men. Abadie shot a water-buck one morning, and three hartebeest that afternoon; and next morning I had a turn, coming suddenly on four bush-buck drinking at a stream. One I shot before they started; my second barrel dropped

another as they dashed into the bush, and his sudden downfall caused the other two to check a moment and look round, when, reloading, I scored a miss by my same old right trigger going off too soon, but dropped a third with the left.

I cannot excuse this sort of shooting though, except in an out-of-the-way and unhealthy part of Africa where white men can only be rare visitors at the most, and where riding or stalking game is impracticable.

The end of this trip came in the shape of an express messenger recalling us to headquarters, and as we were really on our long leave, and had finished with our time of service in Nigeria, we could only suppose it was a matter of great moment, and we therefore made haste to pack up our traps and make for the Niger again. The Bariba hunters and ponies we sent back to Kiama laden with meat and presents of cloth.

The cause of our recall proved to be a request for troops to be sent to Cape Coast Castle in anticipation of trouble Kumasi way. It was a great feather in the caps of our newly raised Waffs to be called on so soon to aid the Empire in, to them, foreign parts, and Sir James Willcocks, feeling sure that we would not like to be out of it, had very kindly given us the chance of accompanying our men, although our time was really expired.

NIGER STORK.

[*To face p.* 230.

We had a day or two at Lokoja, getting everything ready, and were about to start when another wire came to say that we weren't required after all. This was, of course, the same trouble that was to come to a head a year later, when the Waffs, under their old chief, Sir James Willcocks, covered themselves with glory.

Our leave had now been broken into, and we were thus enabled to start it again with a clean sheet; and as we were by now beginning to feel the effects of our hardships and campaigning in a not too salubrious climate, we were glad to take ship and return home.

We brought along some West African ostriches, which Abadie had secured up-country, got them on board in large crates, had a run constructed for them on deck, and Abadie had the satisfaction eventually of presenting them alive and well to the Zoo. These were, I believe, the first of their kind ever brought home.

The relief of getting into decent air at the Canary Islands only the " coaster " knows.

CHAPTER XIV

A BORGU LEOPARD

I was rather dissatisfied with my first turn in Northern Nigeria; I mean from the big-game point of view. My area of operations had been limited, and work so incessant, that my hunting trips had been seriously neglected. I was particularly anxious to hunt in the regions towards Lake Chad, and as it was the intention to send an expedition in that direction, I volunteered for a second term of twelve months' service. The South African troubles did not at the time seem like coming to a head at once, and as my regiment was in India, I didn't see that I was furthering my chances of active service by going there. No sooner had I reached Lokoja, however, than cables from home arrived announcing, first, that war had broken out; secondly, that my regiment, among others, had been despatched from the East to the seat of war; and, thirdly, that all forward movements in Nigeria must temporarily cease. This was a series of terrible

blows, but I bore up sufficiently to have a very nice little shoot at Lokoja, in the course of which I actually surprised a herd of hartebeest in the open for the first and last time in Nigeria. It was in the month of November, and two of us had climbed up the range of hills behind the town, camping on a high spur called Benoui pati. These hills are table-topped, the well-known African shape, and Benoui pati boasted the only bit of country quite clear of bush that I ever met in Nigeria. It was in the middle of this that I spotted early one morning a herd of seven hartebeest. I had a most delightful stalk, *ventre à terre*, and got fairly close, closer than I judged, as picking a fine bull I missed him clear, and must have gone over him, for, taking in the same amount of foresight, I hit him in the back of the head, when he had already galloped some distance, with my second barrel.

Thereafter, the cover being at its densest, I had but little sport, and at the beginning of 1900 I was made Governor of Southern Borgu, without having added materially to my bag.

I was now in a most sporting country, and only waited for the country to dry up a bit to get some good sport. Meanwhile I collected as much "khubber" as I could, and worked hard to get as much in front of time with my duties as possible, that I might have more

leisure for hunting later on when the grass was down.

At the beginning of February I judged that the state of the country warranted my commencing operations, and accordingly went out to a small village on the banks of a stream. I had, since my return to Nigeria, collected my Yoruba soldier, Ajala, my interpreter boy, Bakari, and the King of Kiama's hunter. Everything, therefore, presaged success.

The bush was still somewhat dense, but my first day I bagged three duiker; I also put up a herd of water-buck, but though I ran on their tracks till I was completely done up, I failed to get a shot.

My second day I shot an oribi fairly early, but saw nothing more; for some reason the bush seemed deserted. That reason I was soon to meet.

About midday I was returning to camp for lunch; my ordinary hunter was not out, but a native of the village where I was camped had taken his place. I was nearly home; the heat was intense, and though I had nothing on my body but a thin vest, I felt as if I was in a Turkish bath. Under these circumstances I broke through my rule of always carrying my ·500 Express myself, and handed it to Ajala behind. The villager was carrying the little buck on his head; I had hit it rather far back, and its entrails were hanging

KING OF KIAMA'S HUNTER, SHOWING HIS BED AND PLATFORM OF STICKS FOR SMOKING GAME.

[*To face p.* 234.

out, so that it was somewhat odoriferous. Passing through a very heavy patch of bush, I heard something moving parallel to us and quite close to our left. I glanced back, and Ajala was not there; I supposed he had dropped behind, and coming up again had missed us, and was causing the noise I heard, so I gave him a whistle. A second after we emerged on an open swampy bit about fifty yards across. I glanced to my left for Ajala, but instead, out stepped what I took to be a lion within twenty yards. The villager looked round at the same time, gave a yell, dropped the buck, and would have bolted, but that I grabbed him by the hair of his head, knowing that such procedure would infallibly provoke a charge. The beast stood looking towards us, snarling and lashing his tail; he was evidently very hungry, and the smell of the blood of the small buck urged him on, while the sight of us holding our ground puzzled him. I avoided looking full at him, believing that that would bring him on. I never believed in the power of the human eye with carnivora; one has no wish, when placed as I then was, to irritate them, only to deter them by behaving as no other animal would do. Had we bolted, it would have been what he was used to see animals do daily, and in a few bounds he would probably have struck us both down.

All this time I was keeping up a low whistle, and in, I suppose, a few seconds, though it seemed any time, I heard the bushes moving behind me. For a moment I had a horrible qualm that it might be a second lion, but it was Ajala all right this time. He saw nothing, evidently, and with a motion of my hand I stopped him, when still inside the bushes, and, both of us "making a long arm," took my rifle from him. At the same instant the beast gradually seemed to sink into the grass, and, crouching low, made across the glade. By the time I had my rifle ready I could neither hear nor see a thing of him. I have already mentioned that the glade was barely fifty yards across; beyond was the thickest of bush. Anxiety at having such a companion now gave place to agonizing fears of losing him. I ran on, but the grass even here was some three to four feet high, and I could see nothing; then I spotted an ant-hill, its top standing as high as the grass, and in a moment I was sitting on it. Just in time, for as I sat down and got my elbows on my knees, I saw my beast down through the grass, going low but quite slowly, and within a yard of the far edge of the open patch. I shot hurriedly and he stopped, stood right up and snarled over his shoulder. I made sure of a charge now, and having no other rifle and two unarmed men behind me, I daren't give him my

left barrel; but he stood long enough to allow me to reload and give him another, as he moved on again. Once more he stopped to the shot, but made no sound, and had resumed his course and disappeared before I could fire a third time.

I ran up to where he had been, but there were no sounds of a death struggle in the bush beyond, no bloodstains in the grass, and his footmarks were unvaried, not the few quick steps tearing up the ground a stricken beast so often makes. I was in the depths of woe and disgust; but Ajala came up, leaping and shouting because, he said, I'd killed my game. I thought he was trying to let me down gently, and, I regret to say, cursed him accordingly; but so positive was he that I pushed on into the thicket to look about. It was dangerous enough in there with a rifle if the brute was wounded, but Ajala shoved in abreast of me, unarmed, despite my signals to keep back. I hunted about a bit, but I didn't like it, and seeing nothing to encourage me, came out, and had sadly decided to "chuck it" when I heard Ajala whistle. In I went again, and saw my soldier squatting down, pointing under the bushes; and, sure enough, there was a patch of yellow under a tree. Cocking my rifle again, I slowly approached it, throwing bits of stick to see if any life remained. Finally, I stood over

a magnificent male leopard, stone dead. One of my bullets had pierced his heart, though why he made no sign or sound I never understood. He was a very old male, with worn but still huge teeth and faded spots. This may partially account for my having taken him for a lion at close quarters; anyway, spots don't show much on a beast standing in grass with sun throwing shadows on him. In size, he was equal to many grown lions. I most unfortunately lost the measurements I took of him on the ground, and, of course, the dressed skin is no guide; but it gives some idea of his size to say that he now measures 9 feet 3 inches from his nose to the tip of his tail. Except for being somewhat dull and not exhibiting such various contrasts of colour as many leopards, his coat was perfect. I am glad to say I managed to dry him successfully, soldered him up in a tin-lined box, and started him off to London, where he duly arrived, after his long journey, without losing a hair.

Nigeria, with its hot, damp climate and its long spells of rain, was the most difficult country to preserve skins in. Many of mine, despite the utmost care, were spoilt before I could even start them off. Also, the natives were not to be trusted to look to them properly, and it was often my fate to be called upon to dash off suddenly for some expedition, leaving my carefully tended skins

to their fate. Of course, they were more important really, but one felt shy of pleading that to the authorities!

There was great rejoicing in the small village by which I was camped over the death of the leopard. They were full of stories of the damage to stock and even human beings that these animals had been causing. It appeared that they lived in mortal terror of carnivora, and rarely dared to molest them, only plucking up courage to use a poisoned arrow when they were in an absolutely safe place themselves, and never banding together to hunt a dangerous beast, as do many natives of other parts of Africa.

The high grass was now mostly down, and the bush fires I had caused to be lighted all over the country had still further opened it out, so I promised myself some fine sport; but at the beginning of February all thoughts of game were driven out of my head by a messenger from the Niger, bearing the much longed-for news that I had been appointed a D.A.A.G. in South Africa, and was to report at Cape Town as soon as possible. I found I could get back more quickly by riding for the coast than by retracing my steps to the Niger, so, only waiting for an officer to come in and take over my men, I headed through the bush for Lagos.

From Lagos I shipped to Las Palmas, where I arrived a ragged and disreputable-looking object. I had no papers or kit of any kind to prove my identity, and could only say that I had just arrived from a place no one had ever heard of in the far interior of Africa, and that I was a British cavalry officer on my way to Cape Town. It really was a most suspicious story, and was treated as such. The skipper of a transport, that arrived a few hours after I did, referred me to the consul; he, in turn, wouldn't be responsible for me, and sent me to interview the captain of a British ship of war, who had his doubts. What the end of it would have been I can't say, but, luckily, I discovered that the Hertfordshire company of Imperial Yeomanry, as well as some Irish Yeomanry, were on the transport, and that I knew many officers of both, and several of my old friends were serving in the ranks of the former as well. A party of officers came ashore, and were beyond measure astonished to see me and to hear of my predicament. All was soon put right, and apologies and cocktails at the hotel soothed my wounded feelings.

It was the only time I have ever been called upon to prove that I was myself, and the only time, I think, that I couldn't have done it without delay, and, though no one was to blame, it was a most unpleasant experience.

That evening we sailed for Table Bay, and though the change from the hothouse climate of Nigeria to the frosty nights on the high veldt without a tent, often without even a blanket, was rather sudden, I am glad to say it never affected me sufficiently to put me *hors de combat* for a day.

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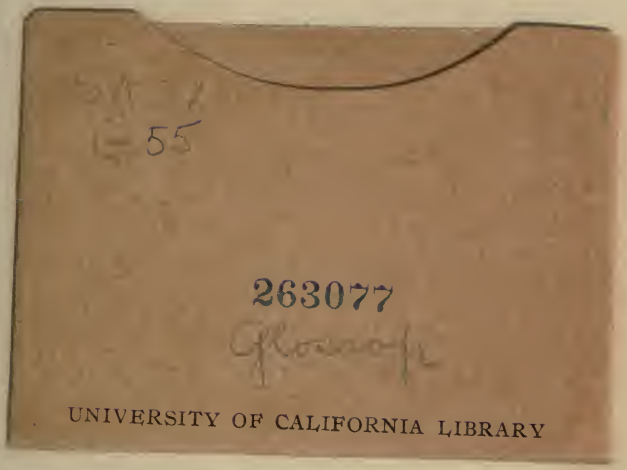
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